



## **Case study: Marketing Plan at B2F**

by

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## **Abstract**

A marketing plan is a crucial document in every company that allows an organization to understand where it is right now, why and where to go. Organizations need to spend a big amount of time in order to define targets, think about market opportunities and set strategies to reach to defined objectives.

This report intends to demonstrate the elaboration of a marketing plan in a case study of B2F, a Business Intelligence SME that operates for more than 10 years without a detailed and coherent marketing plan. This work is the result of an internship that lasted from 5/10/2015 to 8/4/2016.

Business Intelligence is getting more recognized over companies, understanding how data analysis allows them to reach new heights and gain market share over competitors.

The report intends to present the evolution of the marketing plan (research, analysis, and selection of data) and the development of a communication plan for a company that is now pretending to increase market share and visibility in the market. Hopefully, B2F will benefit from the process and results of the marketing plan that was devised during the internship. We believe that this study may also be useful to similar companies (e.g. small companies) facing similar difficulties.

**Keywords:** Marketing plan, Business Intelligence, IT Management, B2F

**JEL-Codes:** M15, M31, M39



## **Resumo**

Um plano de Marketing é um documento crucial para qualquer empresa uma vez que permite que uma empresa perceba a sua situação atual, o porquê dessa situação e qual será o passo seguinte. As empresas precisam de investir grandes quantidades de tempo para definir objetivos, pensar sobre as oportunidades de mercado e definir estratégias para alcançar os objetivos estabelecidos.

Este relatório pretende demonstrar a elaboração de um Plano de Marketing através de um caso de estudo na empresa B2F, uma PME no segmento de Business Intelligence que opera nesse mercado há mais de 10 anos sem um Plano de Marketing detalhado e coerente. Este relatório é o resultado de um estágio que se iniciou a 5/10/2016 e terminou a 8/4/2016.

O segmento de Business Intelligence está cada vez mais a ser reconhecida pelas empresas, que procuram entender como é que a análise de dados permite que novas metas sejam alcançadas e consigam aumentar a quota de mercado face aos seus concorrentes.

Com este relatório pretende-se apresentar a evolução do Plano de Marketing (pesquisa, análise e seleção de informação) e o desenvolvimento do Plano de Comunicação para uma empresa que pretende neste momento aumentar a sua quota de mercado e visibilidade no mercado.

Espera-se que a empresa B2F beneficie do processo de elaboração do Plano de Marketing durante o estágio e dos seus resultados após implementação. Acredita-se que este estudo será útil para empresas similares (p.e. PME's) que enfrentem dificuldades equivalentes.

**Palavras-chave:** Plano de Marketing, Business Intelligence, Gestão de Tecnologias de Informação, B2F

**Códigos:** M15, M31, M39



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## 1. Introduction

The aim of this project is to develop a Marketing Plan for B2F – BUSINESSTOFUTURE (here named B2F) and implement it in order to achieve the objectives of the company, namely to increase brand awareness and gain market share. B2F, is a small company that operates in the Business Intelligence niche: Business Intelligence is a practice that enables access to analysis of information in order to improve and optimize decisions and performance (Gartner<sup>1</sup>), in the Information Technology (IT) market.

Despite the fact that B2F has been operating for 10 years, the company does not yet have a structured marketing plan. The development of a marketing plan requires a deep knowledge of the context where firms operate. Thus, the next paragraphs provide a brief insight of B2F business context.

IT Services are growing at a low but constant rate. From 2010 to 2014 IT Services grew at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 2.2% in Europe. In this segment, the category of consulting & support presented a huge percentage in the market with 62.3% in 2014 (IT Services in Europe, 2015).

IT consulting is nowadays giving steps to become the main category in IT services. This growth allows companies in this market to evolve from simple producers and supporters to business specialist consultants. The uncertainty and fluctuations of the overall economy are a big influence in the growth of several markets. Recent data from “Projections for the Portuguese Economy: 2015-2017 – Banco de Portugal” shows that Portugal will follow the small rate growth of Europe which will allow Portugal to increase the presence of IT sector in the overall market.

In Portugal, the IT Services represent only 15.8% in the ICT market, but in the total IT market, IT Services holds approximately 35% of the market. Forecasts of IDC show that IT Services will grow to 40% in the ICT market until 2020 (IDC Market Report: “Information and Communications Technology Market in Portugal” – March 2014).

Small companies are the main operators in the market (Juntunen, M *et al.*, 2010), and the IT Service segment is also one of the segments that is supported in SME’s. Constantly innovating and changing the way they are present in the market nowadays and with the

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.gartner.com/it-glossary/business-intelligence-bi/>

constant changes in the market, small companies have to prepare themselves to reach to customers. Companies cannot afford to innovate, but the capacity to adapt to the market is crucial.

In that sense, crafting and implementation of a Marketing Plan is an essential element. A Marketing Plan can be the point of differentiation amongst winners and losers (Brooksbank, 1999). A market overview is always important so that small companies are always aware of new changes as understanding what the market is, how it works and what kind of key decision points exist is fundamental to success (McDonald, 2006).

Marketing planning can be considered a technology, a set of techniques and activities, which assists the organization of internal and external inputs in order to reach a certain objective (Pulendran *et al.*, 2003). It is only possible to small businesses to develop and conquer market if they place the general, strategic and tactic planning in the center of the activities, in order to reach the marketing but also the general objectives of the company (Valeriu *et al.*, 2011).

Marketing planning will lead companies not only to understand the market where it operates and their positioning, but also to understand how they can improve their current situation, and set a path to follow in order to reach a certain objective (Kotler and Keller, 2011).

Communication stands up has a main element of the Marketing Plan. A company can only have contact with clients by increasing the communication of the company, services, promotions, product offerings or companies with communication (Gabrielli and Balboni, 2010).

Communication is a very important phase for these companies (SME's), once many companies focus their communication in a Word-of-Mouth (WoM) mainly based on the CEO connections and clients (Jones *et al.*, 2015).

The Internet appears as one of the best solutions for these companies, as the lack of financial and technological resources poses big limits to the increase of brand awareness (Vescovi, 2000). This allows companies to reach a wider public at a lower cost, enabling the CEO to focus on other important aspects of the company such as customer relationship.

The next chapters will describe the literature review of Marketing Plan at SME's (Chapter 2) and the Environmental analysis (Internal and External) at chapter 3 that is summarized in a SWOT analysis. Chapter 4 will describe the Marketing Mix of the company. The last two chapters, 5 and 6, describe the Chronogram and Budget of the strategies defined during the production of the Marketing Plan and the conclusions of the internship at B2F, respectively.





## **2. Marketing Plan**

A Marketing Plan allows companies to create and develop strategies in order to leverage their resources and gain or maintain competitive advantage (Morgan, 2012).

Additionally, a Marketing Plan allows companies to relate all departments, with the objective of developing strategies to achieve their defined goals (Kotler and Armstrong, 2011). This type of strategic planning involves the resources of the entire company in order to acknowledge how every resource may help to seize existing opportunities (Puiu *et al.*, 2009). The marketing plan can vary from company to company, mainly because of the size of the company but also because of the business sector that the company is operating. For example, SME's can create a shorter and less developed Marketing Plan mainly because of less expertise but also because the market where the company is operating is less competitive and does not need such an elaborate plan (Kotler and Armstrong, 2011; Kotler and Keller, 2011).

There are different approaches to the creation of the Marketing Plan but almost all touch the overall points of analysis – Analysis of the external and internal environment of the company; Selection of the fundamental information gathered with the analysis made; Development and implementation of strategies to achieve the goals defined by the company; Continuous following of the strategies implemented (Brooksbank, 1999; Kotler and Armstrong, 2011).

A Marketing Plan should start with an overall view of the market (Puiu *et al.*, 2009). This analysis of the market will allow companies to understand their competitor's moves, the client's necessities, habits, the trends of the market and the actual positioning of the company (Morgan, 2012). Market research should be based on several data such as reports of Industrial Outlook, Journals, Internal sources such as balance sheets, sales and loss statements, internet research using websites of market information and also checking out rivals, by enjoying services of the competitors as their clients. The analysis of the external environment of the company should be supported by frameworks (such as Porter Five Forces and PESTEL analysis) to gather data on the market. PESTEL framework allows companies to research about the trends and limitations of the external environment around the company. It analyses the Political, Economic, Social, Technological, Environmental and Legal aspects that affect the industry where the company is operating

(Wheelen and Hunger, 2011). At the industry level, the Porter Five Forces help companies to acquire information about the industry where the company operates. The intensity of the factors varies from industry to industry, and also from the proximity of companies' core businesses in that industry (David, 2010). The factors that are represented by this framework are the rivalry level between companies, the bargaining power of suppliers, the bargaining power of clients, threats of new entrants and threat of substitute products/services (Porter, 1998). All of these are ways to obtain vital information for the company to start to develop their strategies. Additionally, companies need to define their strategic groups of direct competitors and possible scenarios in the market. Segmentation over clients is also an important analysis, not only by the actual clients but also the possible clients to achieve when defining and implementing strategies (Kotler and Armstrong, 2011). Research should be well thought out before beginning the research with the problem of collect a lot of unnecessary information (Kotler, 2002; Keller and Kotler, 2011).

After the initial phase of research and selection of data, it is necessary to analyze the information collected, in order to go to the implementation phase and afterwards to the controlling phase (Brooksbank, 1999; Valeriu *et al.*, 2011). The analysis of the information will allow the company to do a triage of information, only selecting necessary data to develop strategies. With this, the company understand where it is in the market and defines where they want to go. After this analysis, the company should run an internal analysis to understand which are its main strengths and weaknesses. Companies need to understand if they have a competitive advantage over their competitors. VRIO is a framework that helps companies to be analyzed internally and realize if their resources are Valuable, Rare, Inimitable and Organized for the company exploitation, achieving a competitive advantage over their direct competitors (Barney and Hesterly, 2012). They can also apply an internal benchmarking in order to improve the overall performance of the company based on the good functioning of an inside department of the organization (Kotler, 2002).

Based on the external and internal, it is then possible to run a SWOT analysis. SWOT is a framework that allows the companies to understand which their main strengths are and weaknesses at an internal perspective and which are their main opportunities and threats from an external perspective. It is a mix of internal and external analysis that allows companies to really acknowledge their businesses (Wheelen and Hunger, 2011; Kotler,

2002). Thus, the SWOT analysis will help companies understand how the company's strategies should be developed to achieve its objectives using its strengths to explore existing opportunities, and also to identify which resources are failing and how to improve them (Wheelen and Hunger, 2011; McDonald, 2006).

After the analysis, it is time to design the Marketing Plan that will support the prosecution of the company overall strategy. The Marketing Plan details the implementation plan (e.g., activities, calendar) and the control mechanisms that assure that the strategy will stay in due course (Kotler and Keller, 2011).

### **Marketing Planning in SME's**

Small businesses have to adapt their businesses to change over the time, and the way that it's used is by developing a Marketing Plan in order to analyze the market and subsequently implement strategies to evolve in the market. Customer satisfaction and habits trends, as well as the way their competitors are present in the market, should be some of the main conclusions of this analysis.

This Marketing Plan should be well thought out, once small businesses have restrictions (e.g. limited financial resources, lack of expertise to produce and low impact in the market) that may limit the density and quality of the Plan (Valeriu *et al.*, 2011; Jones *et al.*, 2015; Gabrielli and Balboni, 2010). Additionally, many of the SME's are not worried about their brand promotion or focused in the creation of a healthy relationship with their clients. By the contrary, the companies are worried in delivery the work that is asked by their clients at a time (Gabrielli and Balboni, 2010).

In a B2B level, companies don't invest in the marketing division even though the period of partnership or relationship between companies are mainly long. B2B companies don't look at marketing as a crucial aspect to develop, being mainly focused in the relational aspect, and less in the marketing strategical evolution of the company (Reed *et al.*, 2004)

### **Marketing Communication**

Although the brainstorming and development of certain strategies to improve the health of the company may be very relevant, one of the main parts to have a valuable Marketing

Plan is communication. It is necessary to communicate with the internal and external environment of the company the decisions made with the goal to obtain a good culture in the company and to reach to a larger public (Inskip, 2003).

A fluent and good communication is the perfect way to achieve goals over clients, and in this type of market, communication is one of the main purposes that allows companies to survive and conquer market share (Vescovi, 2000).

It is important to notice that communication changed over time, and nowadays the technology has changed the way customers see and want to see the information (Kotler and Armstrong, 2011). People see information when they want to see it and can decide if they want, and how they want to receive publicity (Kotler and Keller, 2011). Thus nowadays, companies are changing the way they increase the brand awareness and sales.

SME's brand communication is mainly based on personal selling (Gabrielli and Balboni, 2010; Centeno and Hart, 2012; Wong and Merrilees, 2005). This personal selling is mainly entrusted to the person that owns the company or that has created it. The interaction of the owner helps to increase the network of clients with the company which will help when designing the Marketing Plan (Jones *et al.*, 2015).

There is no better person to talk about the brand than the person that have created it. Despite this factor, the limited resources (e.g. staff and time) or expertise, to implement communication strategies leaves the company relying on the relational marketing approach to create and obtain the trust of its clients and increase the brand awareness of the company (Briones *et al.*, 2011; Gilmore *et al.*, 2001).

This type of marketing has its advantages to the seller and the client. It helps the seller to understand the different ways of approaching different clients and to obtain the trust of the client. The short time for decision making may be one of the advantages for clients to acquire a service or product (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2011).

One new way to reach to customers, despite the "old" strategies of Public Relations or Personal Selling for example, is Social Media, which enables companies to have close contact with a wide range of possible customers with low cost strategies (Nobre and Silva, 2014; Centeno and Hart, 2012; Gabrielli and Balboni, 2010; Kaplan and Haenlein, 2011).

It allows substituting a physical proximity with a virtual interaction and intimacy in popular websites as Facebook or LinkedIn (Jones *et al.*, 2015).

Social Networks appear as an important way for companies to increase the range of possible clients but also to acquire new tools to create brand awareness, reputation and extend its communications (Nobre and Silva, 2014).

Facebook has a set of skills to each company, allowing to expose the company brand over the profile picture and the cover photo. It enables also to define a specific public to each post, what's becomes an advantage to not only understand which is the best public for the company but also to specialize the communication to a certain public. Companies can understand which are the best results by monitoring its posts growth and change some aspects to test and reach new conclusions (Nobre and Silva, 2014).

LinkedIn is also a network that allows reaching a wider range of people but with a more professional communication. LinkedIn allows companies to share content with the public, invest in ads to increase the range of the post, engage with several followers. The communication tends to become more formal over the network which is mainly used by companies but also by professionals looking for first jobs, new jobs or just increasing their digital presence. As Facebook, LinkedIn also enables companies to analyze and take conclusions over the communication strategy implemented in the network (Kietzmann *et al.*, 2011).

In this sense, the advance of technology and communication strategies associated with this development are a very positive way to conquer new customers, especially in SMEs once these companies many times don't have the resources to produce a well-structured communication strategy (Jones *et al.*, 2015).

Summing up, a Marketing Plan is crucial to the increase of results of companies, once it allows organizations to understand where it must improve to achieve bigger goals. This is possible by analyzing the environment, retrieve useful information, defining strategies and then implement and follow the results. This is all possible by the use of several tools (SWOT, PESTEL, Porter Five Forces, etc.). Although this is important, it is not general for all of the companies. It can change from company to company, business to business or industry to industry. SMEs are the perfect example. The size of the company demonstrates the difference that it is necessary to have in the marketing plan at these companies (mainly because of low financial resources, expertise and time).

The internet and mainly social media are tools that SME's can and should use in order to reach different client with a wider range improving the operation area with lower costs

that traditional tools. At the same time, it allows companies managers to focus on possible problems and define strategies to increase the market share of the company. It will lead companies to structure digital plans to obtain the maximum profit of an ascending tool in society.

In the next chapter, we will know the core business of the company, B2F, understanding the evolution in of the company through the years.

### **3. Environment Analysis**

Any analysis of the opportunities and threats facing a firm begins with an understanding of the environment in which a firm operates. This analysis consists of gathering information about all the trends and external factors that can have an impact on the company's strategy (Barney and Hesterly, 2012).

Even though the external environment of a company can be very broad, the social and economic forces are key aspects so that companies may manage their resources and define strategies in order to improve their position in the market (Porter, 1998).

An opportunity appears in the market when a company has the chance to have a big profitability in a certain area of interest because of a good strategy development and competitor analysis. A possibility to have an opportunity in the market in by offering something that is short supply. One other way is to supply an existing product or service in a different and innovative way or, creating a new product/service (Kotler and Keller, 2011).

A threat is developed by an unfavorable trend or any external factor that may lead to a decrease or profit because of a low defensive strategy. In this cases, the competitors are one step way with bigger probabilities to improve their market position. Threats are one of the major aspects that companies need to be aware because they can destroy companies of not detected and dealt with in short time (Kotler and Keller, 2011).

Companies may have a good possibility to find opportunities in the market in order to reach a higher position over its competitors. But, in order to achieve that mark, companies need to understand if they have resources and capabilities to catch those opportunities analyzing its internal environment (Kotler and Keller, 2011).

Despite external analysis being extremely important to understand the market opportunities, the competitors and the company's public, internal analysis must be taken also as an imperative analysis for companies, once it is only possible to maximize the potential of its resources by analyzing the level where they are and the level where they need to be (Morgan, 2012).

An internal analysis should involve a comprehensive cover over financial aspects, technical abilities, customer relationships, employees, communication, and many others. This analysis should help the company to understand which are its core competencies and

strengths, in order to understand if the company has a competitive advantage and can conquer the opportunities present in the market (Brooksbank, 1999).

It is a crucial analysis to companies once it helps them to understand if there is an actual problem in the company that might be jeopardizing the company's performance and results (Puiu et al., 2009).

The next chapter (3.1) begins with an external analysis of the company's environment in order to determine the opportunities and threats that B2F faces in the BI market. The sections 3.1.1 and 3.1.2 present the PESTEL and Porter Five Forces framework, respectively to analyze the BI market in Portugal. It is also defined the strategical positioning of B2F according to the strategic group defined (section 3.1.3).

The chapter 3.2 presents the internal analysis of the company beginning with the company presentation at section 3.2.1 followed by the description of the Mission, Vision, and Values of the company (section 3.2.2). After, it is presented VRIO analysis (section 3.2.3) with the main objective to find if B2F has competitive advantage basing the analysis in the Technical skills (section 3.2.3.1) and the Human resources of the company (section 3.2.3.2). Then, client portfolio and communication of the company (sections 3.2.4, 3.2.5, respectively) are analyzed.

The internship was mainly focused on communication, which was one of the major problems of the company, specifically in the social network. Still, other aspects were taken in consideration in the analysis of the company.



### **3.1 External Analysis**

#### **3.1.1 PESTEL Analysis**

PESTEL framework helps companies to analyze the external environment of the company focusing in the Political, Economic, Social, Technological, Environmental and Legal aspects of the market (Armstrong and Taylor, 2014).

All of these aspect may influence companies in order to develop strategies and conquer market share. These influences have different impact according to the core business of the company in which, for example, the Political aspects of the environment does not influence at all the roll of the company in the market (Wheelen and Hunger, 2011).

When analyzing the company over certain factors using the PESTEL framework we discover that not all of them influence the company.

In this section, the main source of data was the reports of the BI industry (secondary data) provided by the company in order to understand the external environment allowing to reach the following conclusions.

#### **P – Political**

Political influences, such as government stability or taxation policy (for example) may limit the operations of companies in the market. Certain political policies into the internal market or internationalization aspects may deliver obstacles to implementation of certain strategies. B2F is not influenced by this aspect (Johnson et al., 2005).

#### **E – Economical**

Economy instability always affects the health of companies, mainly SME's because they haven't such a big and good financial structure, depending a lot of the demand of their actual and possible clients. Economic crises are a big factor in determining how the business may turn, the increase of prices, the downturn in demand and the bargaining power of suppliers lead to fluctuations with big consequences to the company. At the worst case scenario, employees are affected by the increase of redundancies (Wheelen and Hunger, 2011).

## S - Social

Not only economy fluctuations but also the way how companies and individuals look at BI is the main factor of how this type of businesses may have success. For most of the companies nowadays BI is an underexplored segment. This turns the work of SME's in this area more challenging and difficult. The short steps that companies are heading in order to understand the importance of BI in their business delay the evolution of this segment, but also the productivity of companies. This fact shows that companies nowadays don't live without technology. It is a granted aspect; every business has a strong technology component now.

## T- Technological

This leads to the need of following the evolution and the trends of technology. In BI, the need of update software's and processes are crucial, allowing companies to be always one step ahead and to satisfy the client needs. Not only updates but the increase of BI allied to other categories as cloud storage are nowadays being an ascending trend. The fact that these clouds allow clients to store information in a quick and easy way are a factor that companies will start to acquire at a high rate.

## E – Environmental

This is another aspect that does not influence the development of B2F work once it is not affected by any environmental law, high energy consumption or damage of the environment.

## L – Legal

These type of projects have certain types of legal aspects when designed in certain areas. Mainly in the banking area, BI projects have to follow certain limitations when treating the information, which makes legal aspects another factor that can influence the result of projects.

### **3.1.2 Porter's Five Forces**

As we know, the technological and software market is increasing a lot, even though the recession has delayed their evolution a bit, the growth was delayed but constant. With the growth of the economy is expected Business Intelligence market to follow the trends of evolution of the country.

With this evolution, the increase of investment and trust of customers are factors that will help the market growth, but with growth comes also competitors.

Porter's Five Forces framework allows companies to understand the attractiveness of a market segment over 5 threats: Buyers' bargaining power, Suppliers' Bargaining Power, the Threat of New Entrants, the Threat of Substitute Products and High level of Rivalry (Kotler and Keller, 2011).

To know the competitive forces that affect the market and its causes allow managers to understand where are the opportunities of a certain market which becomes crucial to the strategy shaping of a company and understand the potential of the market. Withal, it enables companies to understand the positioning of its competitors, which is a key factor as understand the company's own positioning. Only after understanding how the market is what it is can a company define the strategy to increase incoming revenues and better positioning (Porter, 2008).

The strength of each force defines the limit of companies to raise prices and earn higher profits. A high force results on a threat, which is likely to reduce profits. A low force can be understood as an opportunity in which companies can earn higher profits. Together, all the five forces define the intensity of the industry. It intends to help companies to understand how small aspects can determine big differences in the company with changes induced by several industry aspects (Porter, 1998).

As in the previous section, the main source of data was the reports about the BI industry (secondary data) provided by the company and the workshops with employee's and B2F's CEO that seek the comprehension of the market through the experience workers in the area (primary data).

### Buyers' Bargaining Power

The growing bargaining power of buyers shows the unattractiveness of a market. This happens when the buyers become more concentrated, the switching costs are low, the product is undifferentiated or when the product represents a high fraction of the costs (Wheelen and Hunger, 2011).

In order to companies fight against the buyer's power, it is necessary to develop superior offers so that strong buyers cannot refuse (Kotler and Keller, 2011).

When looking into the buyers' power in this market, we need to understand how they can have power over companies. One way is by realizing that the companies that are delivering the service are not effective and the buyer becomes also the supplier, starting to answer to the company own needs internally. That doesn't happen in this market because BI market it's not so easy to self-learning, and it would lead to a loss of resources over the companies when trying to solve their own necessities.

The services provided are mostly the same, the only change is the perfection how companies deliver results to the companies. This gives buyers power to decide which the best company by price or quality service is. The range of possible buyers is big presented in very different segments, having most of the times a recognizing delay of understanding how BI services can be profitable to the company.

With this, we can assume that the power over buyers is **moderate**, mainly because buyers have a low understanding of how BI would help companies to increase profitability delivering decision-making power over buyers.

### Suppliers' Bargaining Power

When talking about the supplier's bargaining power, this happens when the product supplied is an important input, the suppliers are concentrated, with low competitors increasing the switching costs which allows suppliers to increase the price and decrease the quantity to supply (Kotler and Keller, 2011).

The best way to reduce the bargaining power of suppliers is by having a high number of suppliers, which allows the opportunity to have more solutions and diminish the threat over company's profit (Barney and Hesterly, 2012).

In this market, there are two points that we need to take into account:

- 1- Suppliers supply all the base software to small companies in the market;
- 2- The need of SME's to increase the software range in the several market segments.

Suppliers are the ones that supply all the base software in order to small companies to build upon them. So, if they produce what companies need and they are concentrated as producers in this market they may have a very big power over prices.

Moreover, Vendors connect also with final customers, having a big influence on the decision-making process. With this, the supplier power can be high. But, let's not forget that in order to these programs to work they need that the small companies agree with the terms and to be present in diverse segments of a huge growing market. Supplier power can be moderate by having this necessity of partners in order to spread over the market.

In conclusion, Supplier power can vary between **moderate** to **high** depending on certain situations in the market.

#### Threat of New entrants

New entrants are new companies entering in a new industry motivated by the possible earnings that a certain market can provide. These entrances provide a higher competition over the market and may decrease the performance of the companies already operating in the market (Barney and Hesterly, 2012).

Industries with high barriers to entry and high exit barriers are high profitable industries, but with a big risk. It is necessary to have a good strategy and management performance in order not to suffer in a high competitive market (Kotler and Keller, 2011).

New entrants are nowadays growing in this market although is not easy to live in it. Economic stability is able to lead to an increase in investment and trust among buyers and investors, which promote the will of new entrants. But there are barriers to entry in this market. New entrants have to be careful about investment costs, the companies that are already in the market have already a competitive price in the market, and it is not easy to gain confidence without experience.

This is another factor that appears as a barrier to the entrance of new companies. Experience is a key point in this market, without previous experience in the market,

without connections over clients, suppliers and distribution channels is very difficult to gain terrain over competitors that are already in the market.

So the Barriers to entry are **high** even with the growth of the market.

### Threat of Substitutes Products

Substitutes are products that satisfy the same need of the client in, possibly, some different ways with the chance of surpassing the actual product of the market by innovation or price strategy (Barney and Hesterly, 2012)

At the same time, it defines a ceiling at the price that companies can charge, reducing the profitability of companies and the overall of the market (Wheelen and Hunger, 2011).

In the BI market, there are mainly two substitutes.

One of them is Software-as-a-Service (SaaS). SaaS is nowadays searched by many companies that don't have either time or money to pay for BI consultants to gather all the information and present it. There are risks using this “easy way”. One of them is the fact that there is no data warehouse in order to gather all the information. Of course, it depends on company needs and the money they want to spend. The program can be simpler and easy to use as more little the needs of the company are. The risk is that the simplicity may not be the best choice because the needs of the company can change and the company cannot reach their objectives.

Some of this tools are Clearify Qcube, Tableau Desktop, Domo, Qlik Senses, Zoho Reports.

Self-Service software is another substitute. SaaS is a complement of Self-service software, making it available to be easy and quick to use. Information users nowadays search for tools that are easy to use, aggregate lots of data and delivers precious information. But, is not always easy to simplify vital information in order to make the tools working, being a risky choice with probabilities to fail if not used properly.

So, there is a **high** risk of substitutes, companies nowadays are searching for simplicity and low-cost products, which means that substitutes are gaining space in the market.

### High level of Rivalry

The rivalry level is defined by the performance of the companies in the market by using strategies to improve their profits but also by high fixed costs or high barriers to exit the market. This leads to price wars or innovative advertising strategies increasing the investment over the market (Kotler and Keller, 2011).

The lack of differentiation of products (which leads mainly to a price wars), a slow evolution of the market (increasing the purchase of competitor's market share) or production capacity added in large increments (possibly leading to an oversupply and a decrease in the price) are other factors that influence the level of rivalry in the market (Barney and Hesterley, 2012).

Software industry grew since the decrease of the recession in Europe. Big cities as Prague, London, Paris and Berlin compete constantly in order to grow more in this market and have more investment, and positive indicators related to the trust of investors and growth of the market were growth enhancers to this market.

The Software market had a constant growth since 2010 in which companies started to bet and combine their services with the best software, such as Network and database management, to improve their profitability in the market, justified by a compound average growth rate (CAGR) of 4,1%. Forecasts show that the growth of this market intends to keep going increasing the CAGR of 4,1% to 5,3% until 2019.

| <b>Software</b>   | <b>2010</b> | <b>2011</b> | <b>2012</b> | <b>2013</b> | <b>2014</b> | <b>CAGR</b> |
|-------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Value (billion €) | 66.6        | 69.2        | 71.7        | 74.7        | 78.2        | 4.1%        |
| % Growth          | -           | 3.9%        | 3.6%        | 4.3%        | 4.7%        |             |
| <b>Software</b>   | <b>2015</b> | <b>2016</b> | <b>2017</b> | <b>2018</b> | <b>2019</b> | <b>CAGR</b> |
| Value (billion €) | 82.5        | 86.8        | 91.5        | 96.3        | 101.3       | 5,3%        |
| % Growth          | 5.4%        | 5.3%        | 5.4%        | 5.3%        | 5.2%        |             |

*Table 1 - Software Market Growth and Forecasts (adapted from MarketLine Industry Profile – Software in Europe, June 2015)*

Once B2F is an IT consultancy company, the IT Services market is also a very important aspect to consider.

The value (in billions of €) in the IT Services is bigger than the Software market. Even though the value is bigger, the CAGR until 2014 (2,2%) and forecasts until 2019 (2,6%) were lower than the Software market. The presence of companies in this market is bigger, and only recently companies started to focus on specific markets.

| IT Services       | 2010  | 2011  | 2012  | 2013  | 2014  | CAGR |
|-------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|------|
| Value (billion €) | 195.0 | 200.8 | 202.9 | 206.5 | 212.5 | 2.2% |
| % Growth          | -     | 2.9%  | 1%    | 1.8%  | 2.9%  |      |
| IT Services       | 2015  | 2016  | 2017  | 2018  | 2019  | CAGR |
| Value (billion €) | 195.0 | 200.8 | 202.9 | 206.5 | 212.5 | 2,6% |
| % Growth          | -     | 2.9%  | 1%    | 1.8%  | 2.9%  |      |

Table 2 - IT Services Growth and Forecasts (adapted from MarketLine Industry Profile – IT Services in Europe, June 2015)

Companies tend to increase their presence in the IT consulting segment and become specialists in order to achieve a bigger audience and increase the trust of their clients in the services.

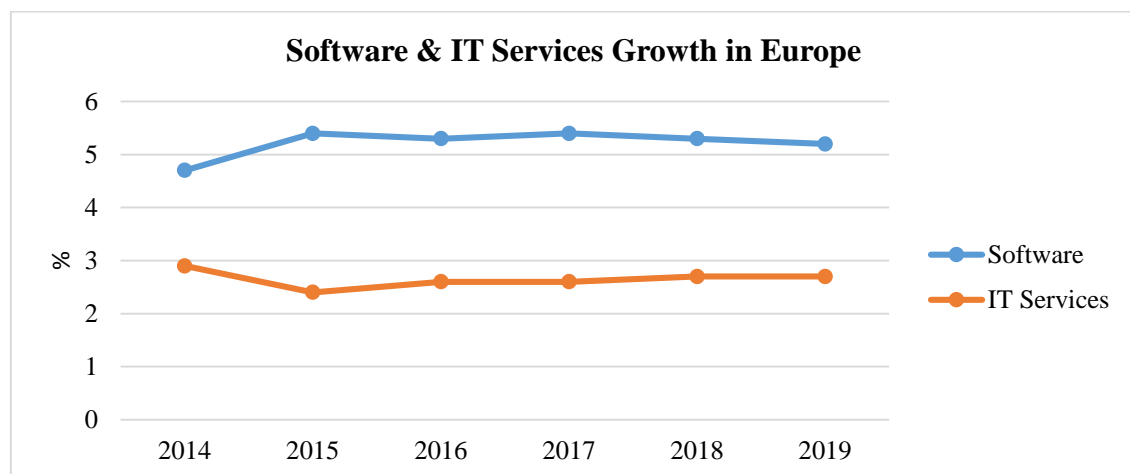
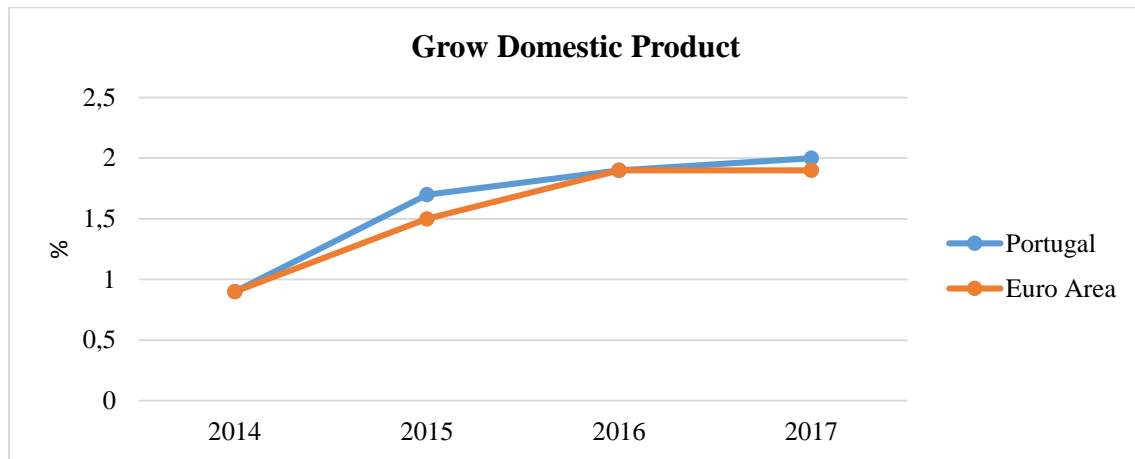


Chart 1 - Software and IT Services growth in Europe (adapted from MarketLine Industry Profile - IT Services in Europe, June 2015 and MarketLine Industry Profile – Software in Europe, June 2015)

The increase in the GDP at the Euro Area was followed by Portugal, with the tendency to grow at a low rate. This indicator shows that countries are starting to leave recession,



improving their trust in the market, but with careful investments in more specific markets as IT and Software.



*Chart 2 – Portugal and Euro Area Grow Domestic Product forecasts (adapted from Banco de Portugal, Projections for the Portuguese Economy: 2015 – 2017)*

According to IDC – Information and Communications Technology Market in Portugal (March 2014), IT Services in Portugal will maintain the world's market flow and increase at a CAGR of 1,7%. Nowadays it represents 15.8% in the ICT market. Forecasts tend to increase the weight of IT Services in Portugal to 40% until 2020.

With a big market in the IT and Software market and the continuous demand increase of these markets, BI starts to grow along with them. The level of rivalry is increasing nowadays, now more because the economy is starting to grow again. The main companies that are providing these services are small and medium companies, which are divided all over the country.

The level of rivalry can be considering **high**, once the size of most of the companies is the same and each one of them tries to gain share market to their competitors by innovating, by being partners of Vendors like Microsoft, IBM, Oracle. This many times allows these small companies to increase their portfolio of clients and gain more trust by having such a big company as a partner.



### 3.1.3 Strategic group

Defining a strategic group in order to understand the direct competitors and which similarities competitors may have with our company. Competition is extremely important in order to reach the highest level of information about competitors and understand which are the strong and weak points in order to define strategies to improve the position in the market (Peña, Jamilena and Garcia, 2015).

Using the *Sabi* platform (secondary data) at FEP's online library, it was possible to reach new data about the weight of the BI companies in Portugal and the income revenue presented below. It is clear that the overall of the companies are present at the South of Portugal, a region of a possible growth in this area most of all because of the business community that is operating in that region.

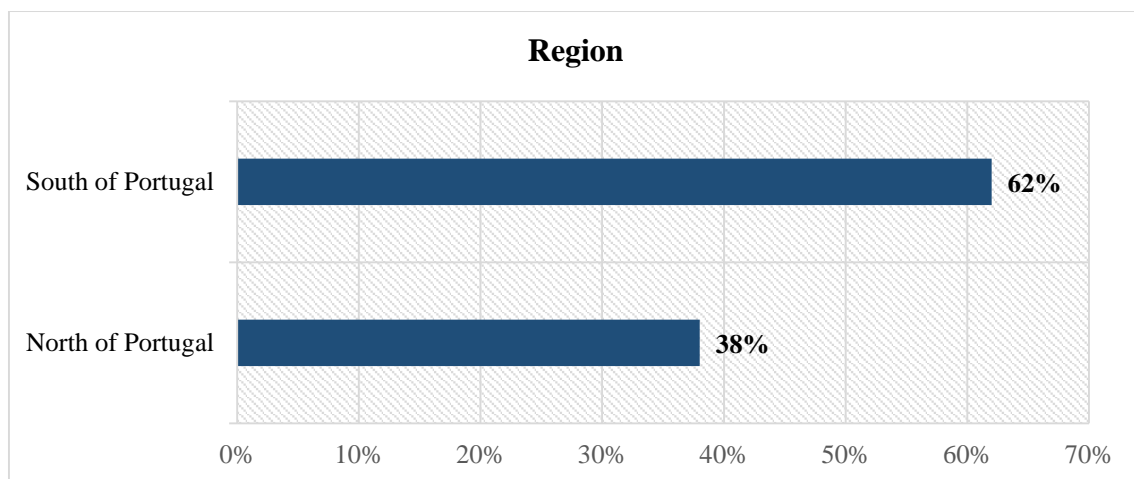


Chart 3 – % of competitors operating in the North and South of Portugal

The main aspects that allow these companies to be in the same strategic position are the similarities of services and industrial approaches. The fact that the majority of these companies are SME's as B2F, shows that the modus operandi of these companies are not so distant from each other. Of course, there are differences among how companies act with clients and the existence (and not existence) of developed products from the company.

As B2F, all the other companies operate in the BI segment, attending also tailored development at the software area. Along with the similarities at services, the industries

that these companies operate are very similar and some of the clients are the same. When looking to the Operational Revenue of last year we find differences amongst earnings of each company. Some of those, because companies have a bigger support by vendors and are subsidiaries of a bigger company that entered in this segment. Furthermore, some of the competitors also operate abroad, which allow them to have a bigger amount of operational revenue.

| NAME  | LOCAL        | OPERATIONAL REVENUE<br>(2014) |
|---|--------------|-------------------------------|
| B2F   | ERMESINDE    | 732 936 €                     |
| WEDO  | MAIA         | 40 542 769 €                  |
| BI4ALL  | LISBOA       | 3 109 856 €                   |
| CULTO DO BI   | PORTO        | 56 250 €                      |
| DEVSCOPE  | PORTO        | 1 726 380 €                   |
| NOVABASE SERVIÇOS - SERVIÇOS DE GESTÃO E<br>CONSULTORIA, S.A. | LISBOA       | 10 818 056 €                  |
|   | <b>TOTAL</b> | <b>56 986 247 €</b>           |

Table 3 - B2F competitors in the BI market (Values extracted from “sabi” in November 2015)

The total value of the defined market is from **56 986 247€**, a small value of the BI market in the world and in Portugal. This group was selected based on the similarity of services, proximity of revenues and direct competition in the achievement of new projects. Despite few of the competitors (for example WeDO) have a big difference in the revenues, they are active competitors in seeking and compete for new projects in the market (especially in the North of Portugal).

Additionally, we also compared B2F and its competitors on the basis of their Technical Skills and Communication strategies.

Technical Skills stands out as the capability to answer the client’s problems in the best and quickest way possible, translating the flexibility of the software and service to the client’s market as also the company culture of operation.

Communication points out the “noise” of the company in the market. It intends to evaluate the level of communication in the market using several tools to accomplish the best awareness of the brand as Social Media, events, workshops, BI and IT conferences and many others.

In order to evaluate what is B2F positioning in a proxy of the perception of customers, meetings with employees and B2F’s CEO and a direct research at competitors and B2F websites was made in order to compare and define the positioning of each company at the strategy group defined. An evaluation from 1-6 (1 – Very Bad; 2 – Bad; 3 – Average; 4 – Good; 5 – Very Good; 6 – Excellent) was defined to establish the position of the company over its competitors and with it understand the weaknesses and strong points of the company.

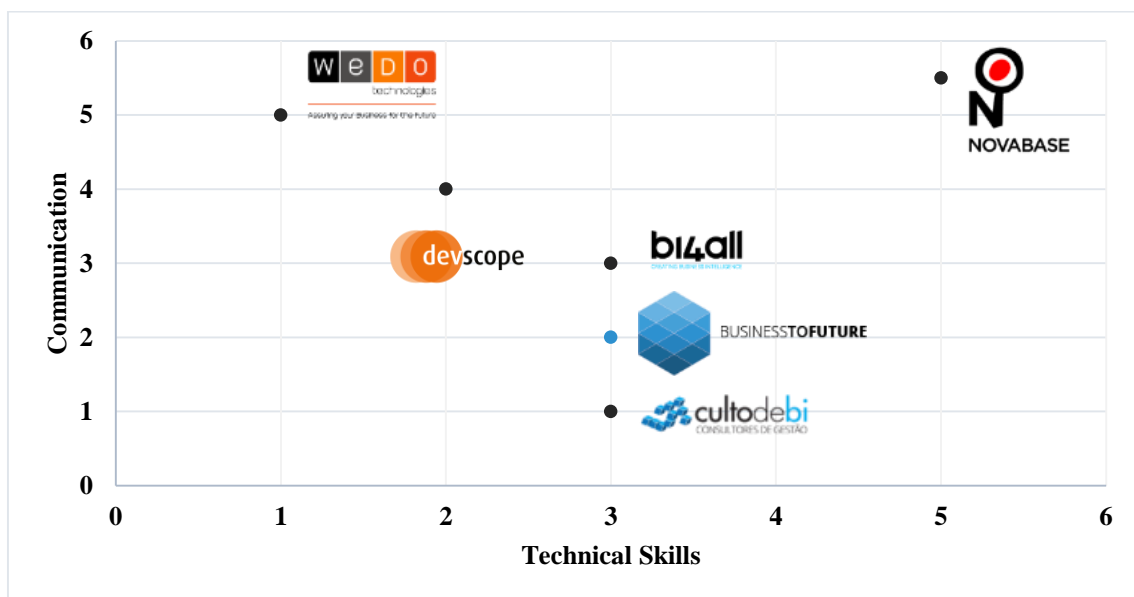


Chart 4 – B2F strategic group companies positioning

**B2F** positions itself as a low awareness company, but with an average technical skill in the market. It allows clients to describe their problem and needs in order to develop projects within the specific needs. This shows the wide capacity over BI software, based mainly on the experience and knowledge of its employees. The awareness of the company is low mainly because of lack of communication over the market. The communication of the company is mainly a Word to Mouth, based on the experience and connections in the

market of its CEO. The presence in social media and conferences were almost none over the past 7 years.

CULTO DO BI and BI4ALL are the companies that are in the closest position to B2F.

**CULTO DO BI** have a low awareness in the market. It's a company with only a year of existence and is trying to conquer market share. Their software is similar to other companies having a range of possibilities for Business Intelligence.

**BI4ALL** have a close level of technical skills but has a high awareness when compared to B2F and CULTO DO BI.

The culture practiced by BI4ALL creates different dynamics over the market, especially in the young public, being this public future employees of future clients.

**WEDO** has a high awareness in the market mainly because it is owned for one of the biggest companies in Portugal, which allows them to have a huge presence inside and outside of Portugal. At the same time, WEDO developed a product for the communication segment. This allows them to be one of the main companies to develop solutions for that specific segment, but to be limited to operate in the general BI market.

**DEVSCOPE** have a higher awareness when compared to B2F or the companies at that level because of close contacts with entities that create that kind of awareness as Câmara Municipal do Porto. Although they have a level of awareness around the market, their technical skills tend to be limited to certain segments of the market.

**NOVABASE** is the best-positioned company in the market according to these two factors. It has a high awareness in the market and operates in many segments of the market. This allows the company to have a stated position in the market and to be one of the highest competitors at this moment with a big presence in the social media, conferences, and workshops. Technical skills are presented over the several solutions delivered for the vast segments of the market. It is one of the biggest company in Portugal operating in the BI market having already a strong presence and experience in this matter.

B2F must increase the awareness in the market through a well-structured marketing plan, taking advantage of the opportunities in the market and of the actual tools that SME's need to use to improve the position in the market.

Despite the communication aspect, B2F needs to constantly improve his technical skills improving the range of areas of operation, producing price strategies to different segments and publics in order to move to a higher position, key-points that will be described abroad. After the implementation of these strategies B2F should be able to move its strategical position to higher one.

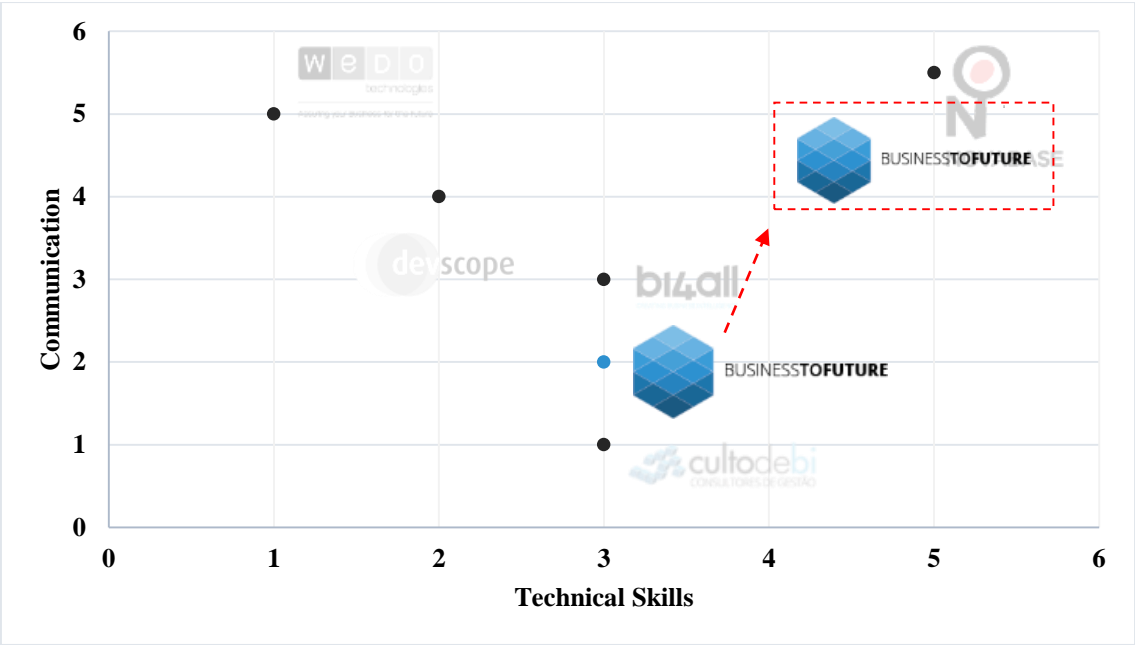


Chart 5 – B2F positioning after implementing marketing strategies





## **3.2 Internal Environment**

### **3.2.1 B2F's History**

B2F is a company that operates in the Information Technology (IT) industry, with the main focus in Business Intelligence (BI) software development. It has a strong history in complex projects, including the development and implementation of client-specific solutions, always with an agnostic position to technology – key to a valuable proposition focused on the client. Recently it had invested in the tailored development of applications.

It was created in the year 2006 with the main focus of entering the market of BI supported in their know-how. The company began operating with two workers and was increasing its clients mainly through word of mouth. This type of prospecting is still the main marketing tool used nowadays, but the company is trying to change the way they expose themselves in the market, changing not only the communication strategy but also their culture. In 2014 it suffered a rebranding in the logo in order to become more technological and updated with the core business of the company. Due to the fact that the connection with the clients is almost totally personal, the impact to the overall market was low. It is having a sustainable growth along the years, always keeping a constant teamwork, an increase in the knowledge and competencies of its team and a support of the CEO and only stakeholder.

The culture of the company leans on a very flexible and elaborative way of reaching the client needs. They operate the project in the client's facilities, not in B2F's facilities. This allows B2F to create a connection with the client by working in their space and attend to their needs, which delivers an image of trust to their clients and allows them to keep a connection in a long term.

Summing up, B2F is a company that has already many years of experience in the BI market, fulfilling its success with a range of big clients over several market segments.

The growth of the company has lead to a higher acquisition of new employees to be able to meet the customer's needs.

The next chapter will describe the company's internal and external analysis, searching to find the opportunities and threats of the BI market in Portugal, strengths and weaknesses of the company in order to develop strategies to reach the main objectives of the company.

### **3.2.2 Mission, Vision, Values**

B2F intends to be the best BI company in the North of Portugal, a direct statement of the B2F's CEO, supporting its clients creating knowledge over company's data, with the objective of allowing a better decision-making process to increase the competitive advantage of the client and the growth of income revenues.

With the vision to “support, innovate and promote the modernization of corporative structures”, B2F intends to respect and pass on its values by exceeding the client's expectations, improving the ability to reach to higher Key Perming Indicators and promote team spirit and knowledge between employees in the different projects.

### **3.2.3 VRIO Analysis**

The VRIO Analysis is used to evaluate company's resources and capabilities and the potential of those resources to reach certain objectives and generate competitive advantages. This analysis can be exploited by the resource-based view and by the positioning view (Barney and Hesterley, 2012).

VRIO's framework it's based on four questions: Value, Rarity, Inimitability, and Organization.

#### **V – Value of Strategic capabilities**

In this question, we need to understand if the firm has resources and capabilities to exploit an external opportunity or neutralize an external threat. One way to understand if the company is using these resources is to check if the company has increased in net revenues or decreases in net costs. This will show that these resources have a high power in the company fluctuation of earnings. Also, this question of Value allows understanding which are the internal strengths and weaknesses of the company.

#### **R – Rarity**

Even though we consider a valuable resource in the company, this resource will only lead to competitive advantage if no one has it in their portfolio. This leads us to Rarity. A resource that is exclusive to a company, and which no other company has it's called rare and may lead to a competitive advantage in the market. The "degree" of rarity and the potential to lead to a competitive advantage varies from situation to situation.

#### **I – Inimitability**

Along to the value and rarity of certain resources, it is necessary, in order to obtain a sustained competitive advantage that these resources are inimitable and lead to a cost disadvantage amongst competitors to develop that resource. There are two ways possible to imitate the resource.

One is by duplicating the resource of a certain company. If the cost of duplicate that resource is not too high, then the sustained competitive advantage of a certain company is only temporary. Also, if developing or duplicate a certain resource is too costly, competitors may opt by a different strategy.

A second way to imitate a certain resource is by substitute it for a less costly and that has almost every aspect of the inimitable resource. This way, and if the substitute is very good, the competitive advantage will be, again, temporary.

#### O – Organization

Despite all of these resources and aspects mentioned before, it is necessary that the company is organized in order to exploit them. Companies' organization is often considered as complementary because alone they cannot generate competitive advantage but when combined with other resources it allows the company to realize its full potential for competitive advantage.

| Value | Rarity | Inimitability | Organization | Competitive Application         |
|-------|--------|---------------|--------------|---------------------------------|
| No    | -      | -             | No           | Competitive Disadvantage        |
| Yes   | No     | -             | No/Yes       | Competitive Parity              |
| Yes   | Yes    | No            | No/Yes       | Temporary Competitive Advantage |
| Yes   | Yes    | Yes           | Yes          | Sustained Competitive Advantage |

*Table 4 - VRIO Framework (adapted from Barney and Hesterly, 2012)*

Next, it is presented the Technical Skills (section 4.2.2.1) and the Human Resources (section 4.2.2.2), the main resources that allowed B2F to grow and increase market share. This analysis was based in internal data gathered from meeting with B2F's CEO to discuss the most important resources and its influence in the competitive advantage of the company.

### **3.2.3.1 Technical Skills**

B2F's most valuable skill is its worker's ability to analyze and produce solutions through its experience and flexibility of analysis and creativity.

Using the skills of several experienced workers in the market and operating at B2F, allows the company to create its own academy, training the newest workers with the different strategies to operate at the different challenges in the market.

Flexibility tends to be another crucial aspect of delivering a successful service to its clients. B2F intends to deliver a perfect service in order to retain their clients and acquire more in the different segments of the market. According to this standards, the company is constantly developing new strategies to reach to its clients' needs by exploring different methods of operation.

Different methods are achieved using different software with other distinct technical features. The use of Microsoft, IBM or Oracle software allows B2F to answer to different needs with specific solutions delivering a very flexible range of answers to the clients' needs.

Amongst their technical skills, B2F has developed a product that is now in constant updates, being updated through constant feedback from workers but also their clients. The IG Portal consists in a Portal of information that centralizes data of the company, allowing to store big amounts of information and compatible with the recent features of Microsoft Office 365, enabling the client to read, store comments to certain documents, edit and analyze from different features in the IG Portal.

The fact that the IG Portal is compatible with the recent Microsoft Office 360 is a great aspect, increasing the competitive advantage of the company over its competitors. The only companies that have similar products like this are vendors, which practice a bigger price.

### 3.2.3.2 Human Resources

B2F has nowadays a total of 21 employees. This number has been growing amongst years mostly because of the increase of projects and acknowledge of the company over clients.

The company does not have an employee acquisition strategy. Over the years, the needs of the company are the main factor that triggers the acquisition of new human resources, which were always fulfilled through internships and entry-level positions. It has been a sufficient method to help the company to satisfy its needs, help students and other workers to have their first, or a current job and intensify the BI segment in the market.

There were 22 workers in the company with an average of 31 years old, which did not change from 2014 to 2015.

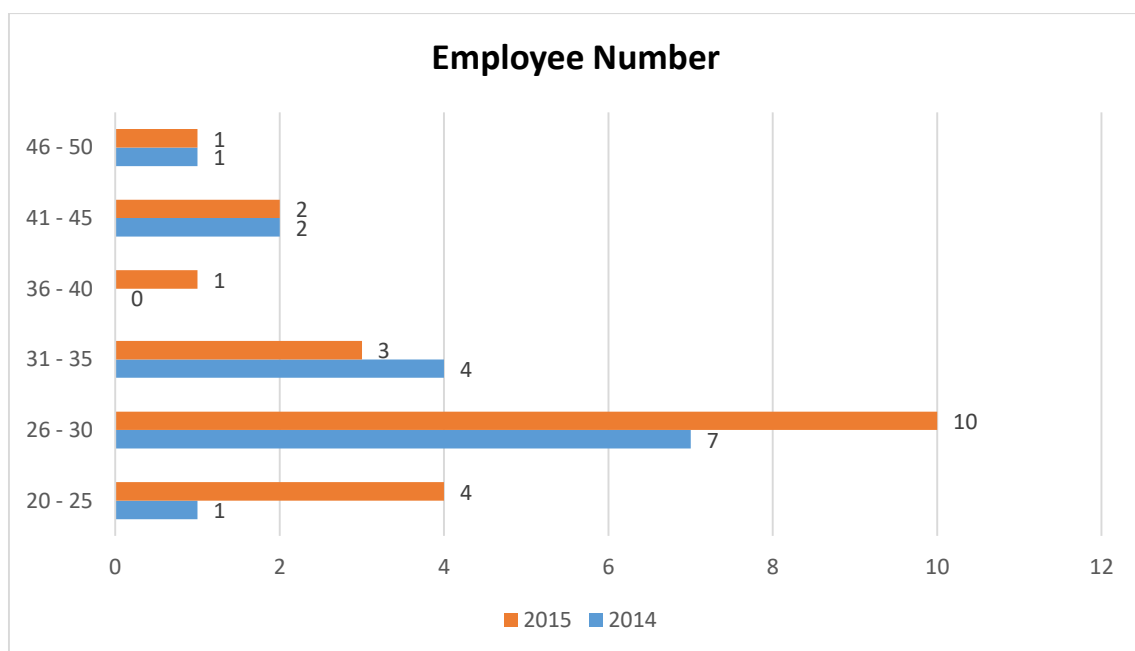


Chart 6 – B2F employees number in 2014 and 2015

The information over the costs and earnings per employee is used in order to obtain a proxy of the company operational costs. Companies in BI, in general, don't have many costs on hardware as the work is developed on the client's equipment. The main focus lies on people with skills in this area, using employee costs as operational costs.

Looking into the data, we see that in the year where there were fewer employees in the company (2013) the earnings and the costs were higher than in any other year. This may lead us to conclude that the employees that were in the company were more valuable and produce more. Also, the projects that were present in that year could be less and more valuable, which may lead to an increase in the earnings of the company.

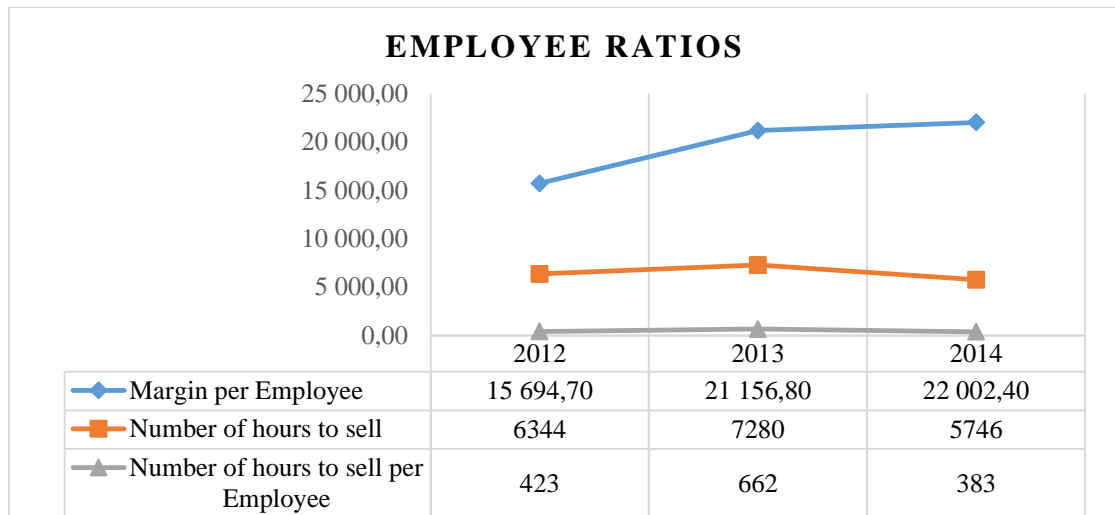


Chart 7 – B2F's employee financial ratios

Analyzing these values, we see that the number of hours that the company needed to sell were higher in 2013, mainly because of the number of employees were low compared with other years. The number of hours to sell took a big decrease in 2014 after the increase of employees. At the same time, the number of projects that the company developed in that year might have been one factor that diminished the number of hours to sell.





### 3.2.3.3 Summary

In order to understand the contribute of each of this resources to the competitive advantage of the company, it was applied the VRIO framework.

The Human Resources present the experience of the employees at B2F and the Technical Skills present the flexibility to use different software and capability to solve different problems using that software.

| Resources        | Value | Rarity | Inimitability | Organization |
|------------------|-------|--------|---------------|--------------|
| Human Resources  | Yes   | No     | -             | Yes          |
| Technical Skills | Yes   | No     | -             | Yes          |

*Table 5 - B2F's resources analysis*

After an analysis of the previous resources we reach to the conclusion that B2F has a competitive parity.

The value of B2F is mainly focused on its human resources. Their experience and flexibility of operation to the different obstacles that are constantly present in the market turn their workers in the most valuable resource in the company.

B2F is being able to exploit its resources with the constant growth of the company in the market. With the multiple large-scale projects that B2F developed throughout the 10 years' operating in the BI market, they built the ability to exploit its resources at the highest level.



### 3.2.4 Client Portfolio

The client portfolio analysis intends to reach to some conclusions about the risk of the losing some clients and understand if it is necessary to diversify the risk in order to prevent future possible complications to the company. For this, it was made a Workshop with the present theme, with the presence of the company's CEO, in order to achieve a wider view of the clients' performance over the company.

The clients of B2F are situated in 8 segments with a total of 50 companies.

From the 8 segments (Industry, Retail, Banking & Insurance, Utilities, Pharmaceuticals, Laboratory, Technological, and Telecommunications), Industry is the one that has more weight in the company (21 companies in this segment). The clients that are presented below are actual and past clients.

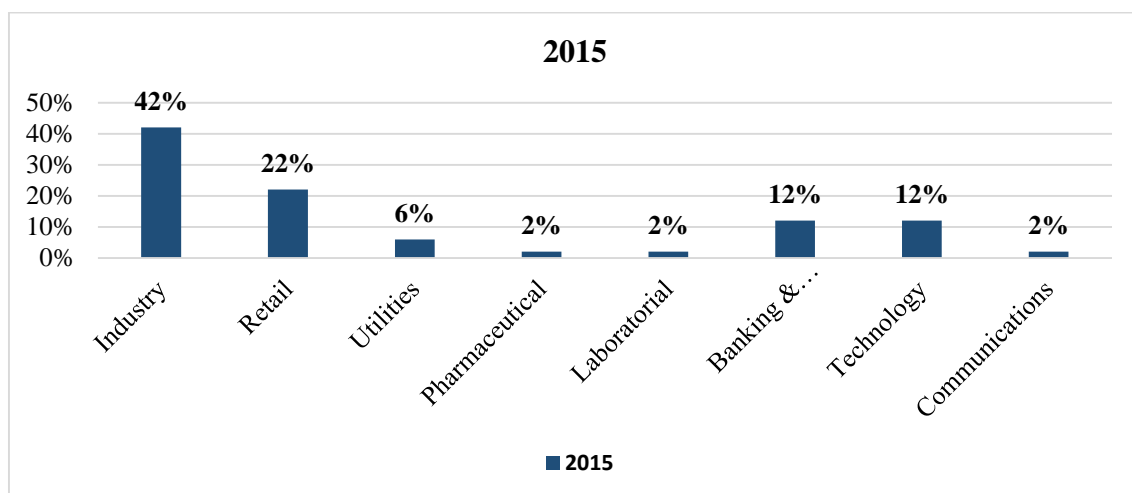


Chart 8 – B2F Client weight in market segments

When looking to the weight of the clients in the financial perspective of the company, it is seen that there is the rule of 80-20, in which 20% of the clients represent 80% of the operational revenue of B2F.

If we look to the clients in every year from 2012 to 2014, we see that the number of clients has been increasing over this period. This shows the small growth of B2F in time, but also an effort to diversify the client portfolio and the weight of the area of operation. Over the years, Industry is still the main segment where B2F gains more market share and

conquer more clients. The other segments have had fluctuations besides Industry. Retail has increased through these three years.

The differences over these three years are mostly notable in the last year.

Analyzing the data in another perspective, let's divide the clients in project value scales and understand which scale is increasing/diminishing and the weight of each scale in B2F.

| 2012       |            |             |                     |                     |             |
|------------|------------|-------------|---------------------|---------------------|-------------|
| Clients    |            |             | Revenue             |                     |             |
| Scale      | N° Clients | %           | Average             | Value               | %           |
| ]50k-400k[ | 3          | 15%         | 101 560,95 €        | 304 682,85 €        | 60%         |
| ]20k-50k]  | 3          | 15%         | 32 426,50 €         | 97 279,50 €         | 19%         |
| ]10k-20k]  | 4          | 20%         | 15 989,84 €         | 54 141,15 €         | 13%         |
| [0-10k]    | 10         | 50%         | 4 497,91 €          | 44 979,10 €         | 9%          |
|            | <b>20</b>  | <b>100%</b> | <b>154 475,20 €</b> | <b>501 082,60 €</b> | <b>100%</b> |

Table 6 – B2F Clients division in scales in 2012

| 2013       |            |             |                     |                     |             |
|------------|------------|-------------|---------------------|---------------------|-------------|
| Clients    |            |             | Revenue             |                     |             |
| Scale      | N° Clients | %           | Average             | Value               | %           |
| ]50k-400k[ | 4          | 17%         | 139 848,38 €        | 559 393,52 €        | 73%         |
| ]20k-50k]  | 4          | 17%         | 28 528,11 €         | 114 112,44 €        | 15%         |
| ]10k-20k]  | 4          | 17%         | 13 774,50 €         | 55 098,00 €         | 7%          |
| [0-10k]    | 11         | 48%         | 3 455,09 €          | 38 006,03 €         | 5%          |
|            | <b>23</b>  | <b>100%</b> | <b>185 606,08 €</b> | <b>766 609,99 €</b> | <b>100%</b> |

Table 7 - B2F Clients division in scales in 2013

| 2014       |            |             |                     |                     |             |
|------------|------------|-------------|---------------------|---------------------|-------------|
| Clients    |            |             | Revenue             |                     |             |
| Scale      | N° Clients | %           | Average             | Value               | %           |
| ]50k-400k[ | 2          | 7%          | 198 240,35 €        | 396 480,70 €        | 54%         |
| ]20k-50k]  | 7          | 25%         | 201 610,20 €        | 201 610,20 €        | 28%         |
| ]10k-20k]  | 6          | 21%         | 81 283,06 €         | 81 283,06 €         | 11%         |
| [0-10k]    | 13         | 46%         | 51 474,89 €         | 51 474,89 €         | 7%          |
|            | <b>28</b>  | <b>100%</b> | <b>532 608,50 €</b> | <b>730 848,85 €</b> | <b>100%</b> |

Table 8 - B2F Clients division in scales in 2014

One important fluctuation was the fact that the ]20k – 50k] scale increased the weight percentage of B2F revenues. The increase in the number of clients in that scale increased over the last three years, and we conclude that it happened to decrease the weight of 2 to 3 companies in B2F revenue (ex. SONAE). The need of diversification in the portfolio is constant and it is visible in the last year. Even though the number of clients increased in that scale, the bottom scale is still the one with more clients but with lower revenue. There is the need to achieve projects with higher dimension in order to reach to bigger revenue. If possible, the high value of the projects can be linked with fewer clients, which liberates human resources to other clients.

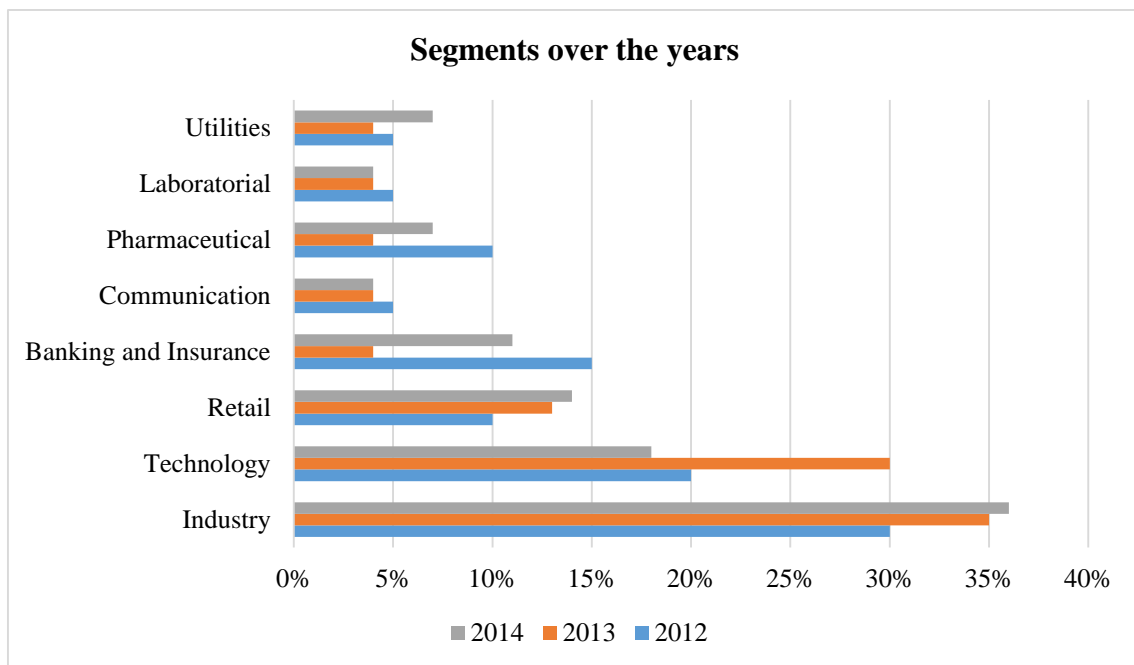


Chart 9 - B2F Clients segmentation over the years

Dividing clients in market segments allows us to understand which segment is B2F more active. Every year, the Industry segment is the one in which B2F mostly operates, followed by Technology and then Retail. The increase of clients also brought the diversification of segments. Even though Industry still is the segment in which B2F is more active, other segments increased their weight in the company. This shows the flexibility of software development and knowledge of human resources at B2F.

SONAE represents the largest client in terms of revenue in since it began as a B2F client. This could be a problem in some aspects. One can be the fact that SONAE is a company

in constant internal and external change, which does not secure the projects for following years. If SONAE stops to acquire services from B2F, it would require a lot of work to replace the revenues that would be lost. Another aspect is the possibility that SONAE has to hire the employee of B2F that is producing the project, leaving B2F with a big problem – no employee and no client.

One way to mitigate this risk is by diversifying the client portfolio of the company acquiring more clients, protecting B2F in the case of losing SONAE as a client. From 2012 to 2014 SONAE's weight at B2F was always near to half of the revenues reaching that value (51%) in 2013. At 2014, SONAE's weight decreased to 40% of the B2F revenues due to the diversification of the client portfolio. The goal settled by the CEO, acquire 2 to 3 new clients by year, with the objective to diminish the weight of SONAE in the revenues showed results and presented a path to follow in the next years.





### 3.2.5 Communication

As stated before, communication is a crucial tool to promote the business to the market. Without any communication, clients will not know which is the core business of the company, where to find it and why should clients choose its services above others. But as we've seen in this chapter, it is not only the external side that matters. Internal communication is also an important piece in a company's conquest of market share once a company with good internal communication delivers best results when defining and implementing strategies (Morgan, 2012). The two complement each other.

Through several meetings with the CEO and employees it was stated that B2F has a problem in both internal and external communication.

Internal communication and organization tends to be a problem once the *modus operandi* of the company is at the client's office. For each client, a worker is selected to assume the client as an "account manager". In this case, the way how the service is delivered to the client changes from worker to worker once each other have his way to program the software and implement the service.

The number of clients is bigger than the number of workers, which make workers responsible for more than one company. Many times this leads to the impossibility to solve the problem in client A and client B, both with the same "account manager".

The real problem is presented in the poor organization and communication over B2F workers once the *modus operandi* at the clients it's not shared with other employees, which makes it impossible to solve a certain problem at a certain client. If B2F sends another worker to solve the problem at a client that is not in his "account," it would take more time to solve it, and probably would change the way how the service was applied to the client.

Time costs money to the client and to be changing the process of the service every time is a problem that would not be very efficient to B2F and to the client.

An interesting factor adding to this problem is that clients create a feeling of trust over the worker that was assigned to his company. The fact is that a different person would take more time to solve the problem and might create a trust problem between B2F and the client.

At the external level, B2F has a low market awareness, having a huge dependence over the CEO connections and the word of mouth from its clients. The digital presence of B2F was almost none, and the social networks (Facebook and LinkedIn) did not display contents in order to promote the knowledge and the services of the company to the public. This situation is particularly problematic as, nowadays, social media is a crucial factor to increase prospects and followers of the company (Nobre and Silva, 2014). Thus, the lack of a constant presence and a constant delivery of information in those networks was a poor use of valuable resources of the company mainly because of the lack of human resources and time to collect, produce and share content.



Chart 10 – B2F Facebook page likes (at the beginning of the internship)

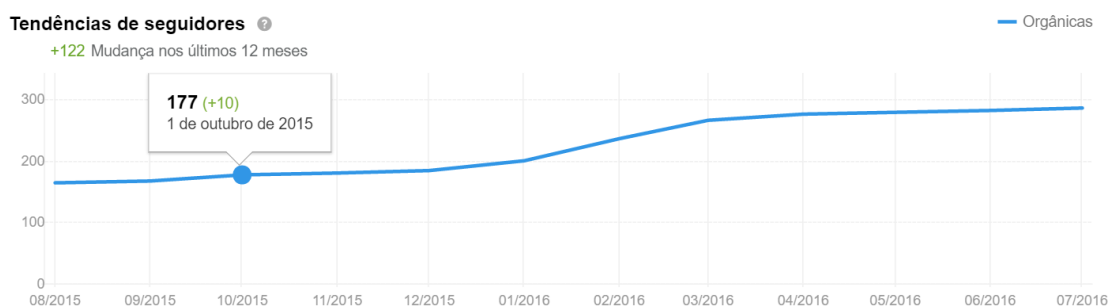


Chart 11 – B2F LinkedIn company page followers (at the beginning of the internship)

### **3.2.6 Conclusions**

The permanent growth at the BI and IT market demonstrates the increase of the interest of companies to the new technologies. Until now, few companies have a strong presence in this market in Portugal, but the increase of trust in the economy and the “end” of the recession leads to a parallel growth of the Portuguese economy and the BI market size.

B2F presents an internal communication problem that affects the relationships between the company and the customer. Despite this weakness, B2F has a big experience and know-how in this market which enables the company to have the chance to seize to opportunities of the market.



### 3.3 SWOT

SWOT analysis is a framework that, with an internal analysis and an external analysis, allows companies to understand which are their Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (Kotler and Keller, 2011).

In the SWOT analysis, the external view of the analysis presents the Opportunities and Threats of the market. An opportunity is an area of the market where the attractiveness and probability of success are high. The success rate is measured by the capacity to turn the company strengths into a competitive advantage and exceed the offering of competitors. By the contrary, a Threat is an external trend that can damage companies decreasing sales or profits. It urges companies to create contingent plans in order to diminish the impact of these market threats. In the internal view, companies tend to define their Strengths and Weaknesses. Companies need to be aware of these two aspects once they will lead the companies to limit its strategy to opportunities where it possesses all the strengths to succeed. Companies need to understand its limitations and work both Strengths and Weakness to increase market share and conquer new grounds in the market (Kotler, 2002).

Despite SWOT analysis is used in the strategical view of the company, it does not present the strategies to achieve competitive advantage and only presents a static assessment of the company internal and external environment which must be updated constantly (David, 2010).

B2F SWOT analysis presents the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats at the moment where the internship was taken and summering the data gathered until that moment.

#### Strengths

One of the main strengths of B2F is their human resources (employees). A team with high quality, huge experience over the market and with a very specific know-how over the projects, functioning as a temporary competitive advantage for the company. It isn't a VRIO resource mainly because of the possibility of imitation (acquire training) and rarity is not so sharp, which leads to a competitive parity in the market.

Another strength is the portfolio of clients, which functions as a good base of confidence for future clients, showing diversity on segments a wide range and powerful names associated with the company, bringing confidence to customers.

### Weaknesses

In terms of weaknesses, B2F presents a big one. Their weak communication over the market leads them to depend on personal contacts in order to obtain projects and profit. Having a weak communication on this B2B market leads to small opportunities over possible companies that are now introducing Business Intelligence (BI) solutions in their business.

Another weakness present is the lack of internal organization, which debilitates the communication between workers about the procedures taken in the different B2F clients. It leads to a loss of information that affects the company performance towards its customers.

The after project procedure is another of B2F weaknesses once B2F does not keep a close contact with its customers, which does not help to increase the loyalty of its clients. It is a loss of possible future projects and a bad reputation for a company that intends to increase its market share and awareness.

### Opportunities

The BI market is growing and with it opportunities. B2F needs to improve communication, selecting and segmenting specific audiences, which will allow to them to increase the brand awareness with different communication, if necessary. One of the major opportunities is the use of Social Media seizing its growth as a main communication channel. This allows companies to be present in several market segments increase the range of possible clients and awareness of the brand.

Despite the low recognition of BI as an important tool, companies are starting to arouse interest in this matter, increasing the growth of the BI market and the opportunity to SME's like B2F to seize the opportunity conquering new clients.

## Threats

With the growth of the market, comes the increase of the competitors in it presented. This is one of the main threats in the market. Although it is difficult to enter the market, because of high barriers, it is not impossible, and the market will become more attractive for new companies. This can be grounded by software updates and development of new software (cloud), the can allow new companies to specialize in those and conquer some market share.

The low rate of recognition from actual companies is another of the threats in this market. BI is often a key strategic initiative that helps companies to develop their business. However, Portuguese companies often don't have the resources or knowledge to invest in this kind of projects. One problem that can appear is when companies realize that BI is useful to improve the business, they make an effort to spend the lowest possible on consultants or event try to replicate the projects in-house with limited know-how. A rising trend is the self-service BI Solutions, a potential substitute for B2F's service and companies can search for this type of software in order to spend low financial resources and, at the same time, improve their business.

| Strengths   | Weaknesses  |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Human Resources (Experience and Know-how);</li><li>- Client Portfolio (Brands).</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Internal processes</li><li>- External Communication</li><li>- Customer Relationship – Project Follow-up</li></ul>   |
| Opportunities   | Threats   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Usage of the Social Media as Communication channel;</li><li>- Growing Market;</li></ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Increase of competitors;</li><li>- Low rate of acknowledging BI importance in companies;</li><li>- Software Update;</li><li>- The increase of substitutes software.</li></ul> |

*Table 9 - B2F's SWOT Analysis*

Based on this analysis, we believe that B2F has the opportunity to become one of the best SME at the BI market in Portugal. The experience and know-how gathered over the years, complemented with the flexibility to adapt to any segment of the market are strengths to achieve a higher position in the market.

The fact that BI services are not, yet, a crucial need for the majority of the companies and the poor communication of the services and advantages of BI from B2F to the public are obstacles that delay the growth of the company's share and awareness in the market.

The next chapter will describe the Marketing Plan objectives based on the external and internal analysis and the strategies needed to reach those objectives in the several areas of operation of the company.



#### **4. Marketing Plan**

This chapter, presents the Marketing Plan defined for B2F according to the objectives of the company (section 4.1) and the segmentation, targeting and positioning of the company (section 4.2).

The section 4.3 it will describe the Marketing Mix of the company, attending to the different strategies that B2F must implement in order to reach its objectives.



## 4.1 Objectives

The definition of objectives is based on the company's mission statements that express the company's values and ambitions to the future (Kotler and Keller, 2011). B2F has the mission statement to become the best BI company in the North of Portugal has we've seen before whereby all the objectives of the company for this year are paths to deliver responses to the aspects summarized in the SWOT analysis and to reach to his mission statement.

It is intended to show objectives that are realistic and achievable rather than objectives that tend to be rather vague and sometimes unreachable (Brooksbank, 1999).

BI is increasing the presence in the market but it is also constantly updating the way of operating over the different segments of the market.

As BI is, yet, a less known tool for the majority of companies, B2F has an open window to increase its market and reach a vast range of companies to increase awareness and profits.

The main objectives of B2F were defined during the internship with B2F's CEO to the year of 2016.

| Objectives for 2016                           |                           |
|---|---------------------------|
| 1. Increase Market Share                      | >10%                      |
| 2. Increase Brand Awareness                   | >50%                      |
| 3. Conquer new clients in Spain (New Country) | Nº of clients (Min):<br>2 |
| 4. Enter in a new segment: Textile            | Nº of clients (Min):<br>2 |
| 5. Improve project Follow-up                  | Nº of clients (Min):<br>2 |
| 6. Improve internal processes                 | >50%                      |
| 7. Improve B2F's Academy                      | >50%                      |

Table 10 - B2F objectives for the year 2016

B2F has 1 major objective to the year 2016 that is increase the market share of the company. In order to reach this ultimate objective B2F needs to settle several actions into different company aspects of the company. Increasing the brand awareness will boost the capability of the company to reach to a higher market share.

As mentioned before, B2F must focus also in objectives with a different corporative nature to increase income revenues with actions as entering in a new country like Spain which is one way to seek new projects and reach new grounds in the Internationalization matter.

With the mission to become the best BI company in the North of Portugal, conquer new clients in one of the strongest segments in the North of Portugal, Textile, also allows B2F to promote the brand in different segments and increase the range of market operation.

The improvement of the project follow-up intends to increase the loyalty of B2F clients and number of projects to operate every year. It is a missing aspect in the B2F strategy until now. This topic connects with the B2F internal processes which need to deliver a better performance in order to increase communication and allow the company to reach certain objectives as the follow-up after project.

Lastly, the B2F's Academy must improve its performance in order to increase the training between employees and improve the capabilities of its workers.

## **4.2 Segmentation, Targeting and Positioning (STP)**

STP is considered the strategic dimension of Marketing. So, in order to design the Marketing Plan that will help B2F achieve its goals, this section overviews the three steps of this strategic process: segmentation and targeting (section 4.2.1) and positioning (section 4.2.2).

### **4.2.1 Segmentation and targeting**

Companies tend to target new segments in which they believe they have a better opportunity to achieve high volumes of profit and increase the market share (Brooksbank, 1999).

B2B markets are full of different clients with different characteristics, needs, objectives and requests, which makes the essence on B2B segmentation to develop an analysis of different market segments, mainly based in the aspects referred before, and understand which are the best segment to develop marketing strategies to meet the expectations of each potential client (Simkin, 2008).

In order to determine the customer, companies need to use several key points in order to develop a segmentation of the market. Firm size is one of the variables used by companies once the high sized companies require mainly high quality and expertise knowledge to solve specific solutions which some of the times this type of companies tend to be out of the range mainly because of the lack of this specific knowledge or few capacities to supply the needs of the company. Another possible variable is the buying criteria used the business customers, which may have a different approach over quantity, quality influencing the price and, therefore, the buying criteria (Filip, 2012).

After segmenting the market, companies should be able to understand how the segment works, analyzing the different aspects of the buyers, and the capabilities of the supply company to satisfy the needs of the customer developing marketing strategies and a positioning stand to these segments (Dibb and Simkin, 2008).

The only segmentation factor that B2F uses is companies above the operational revenue, targeting customer with turnovers above € 20 million euros.

This allows the company to have a defined target, while still addressing specific companies in the different sectors of diverse industries. Additionally, this fact allows B2F to target specific companies and to define a position of quality. Since the early years of the company, B2F intended to reach only for big projects relying on the experience and know-how of the company.

#### **4.2.2 Positioning**

Companies in a B2B market need to define a positioning strategy aligned with the segmentation and targeting approach of the market.

The B2B positioning of a company is defined as the strategy, or strategies, developed by a company which will link the marketing resources with the market segmentation produced, presenting responses to the demand differentiation at the different market segments.

This positioning must be defined according the image that a company wants to deliver to its customers. It can, for example, be a global positioning strategy, where every segment has similar strategies or a differentiated positioning strategy according with the market segment characteristics (Hassan and Craft, 2005).

With this, a clear strategy linking the segmentation and targeting and the positioning of the company towards this segmentation is essential to deliver a better result to the supplier and increase the connection with the customer (Dibb and Simkin, 2008).

B2F has a segmentation variable as we've seen before, intending to become the partner of its customers in the BI segment of the company. Despite the lack of follow-up after the delivering of the service, it is crucial to maintain a close connection with its clients in order to create a loyal relationship between both companies.





### **4.3 Marketing Mix**

The marketing mix is the combination certain key variables that create a competitive advantage when used to affect the market. Each the key variables (product, promotion, price and place) have sub-variables which must be analyzed in order to understand the effectiveness on strategic and corporate performance (Wheelen and Hunger, 2011).

A marketing mix intends to put these marketing tools to work together in satisfying the customer needs, increase customer relationship and improve results. These tools must be integrated into a Marketing strategy of the company in order to create value to the customers. It is a marketing tool that enables companies to have a strong presence in the market and increase market share (Kotler and Armstrong, 2011).

In order to succeed, companies need to pay attention to social, cultural, political, environmental and legal aspects in the market that may limit the action of certain strategies and result in monetary losses (Kotler, 2002). The use of certain tools (for example, PESTEL analysis) as it was used in previous chapters, enables companies to know the limitations of the market and define strategies in order to counteract these limitations. This point will be taken into consideration in the definition of the strategies abroad.

In this point, it will be taken an analysis over seven key elements in the marketing mix, price, promotion, place, people, and process. The physical evidence of the company does not produce any change in the operational performance, not being present in the following analysis.



### **4.3.1 Product/Service**

Products are the goods or services that companies offer to the target market (Kotler and Armstrong, 2011).

To deliver products or services requires not only a high capability to produce objects (if necessary), well-developed organizational routines, top performance over substitute products in the market and high level of focus in the needs of the clients in the several targeted markets (Morgan, 2012).

At B2F the service provided consists in analyzing client's data, treat the information and develop strategies to update constantly that data throughout the upcoming years with the main objective to improve and help their clients in their growth and maximum profit in their businesses.

The fact that B2F is not restricted to a specific software to operate allows them to fulfill their client's necessities in different ways, having a range of operation to solve problems that many equal sized companies to B2F don't have.

Despite the service provided, B2F also provides a product (IG Portal) developed in the company, that allows companies to centralize information. For now, the product is being offered with the service provided to the different clients with the intention to improve its performance.

#### **Product Strategies**

##### **1. Increase product's portfolio**

Despite the improvement of this product, B2F needs to increase the number of products according to the segment in which B2F is operating or wants to operate. This leads to the need analysis of the needs of the different clients in the diverse segments of the market in which B2F wants to operate. After this analysis, B2F must develop new products according to the results achieved and present them to the market in order to reach new customers using mainly the BI event that will be stated abroad, measuring its performance with the amount of new product's developed.

## 2. Improvement of Technical skills of the IG Portal

The development of the IG Portal is a good strategy to B2F improve the connection with the actual clients and present to new clients. In order to a continuous achievement of good results, B2F needs to improve the performance and technical capabilities of the IG Portal so that it can become a competitive advantage amongst competitors. Updates must be done according to the feedback of the clients and the objectives that B2F intends to deliver to the product. This will, hopefully, increase the number of clients and, therefore, number of projects to develop which shall be the key-performance indicator (kpi) to measure this strategy.

#### **4.3.2 Place**

Placement concerns the delivering of the company's product to the client when and where they want it (Brooksbank, 1999).

The strategy delivered to the distribution channels must be efficient in order to bring the product/service close the target public. This task tends to be crucial especially when there are no intermediaries in the delivery of the product, which happens mainly at SME's (Puiu *et al.*, 2009).

The distribution of a product/service to its client is one of the major aspects of a business. The distribution of a product/service may be direct to the client or with intermediaries, and these factors can have a big weight in a significant aspect into a company reputation (Morgan, 2012).

B2F has a direct contact with the client (B2B). As seen before, B2F culture is to operate in the client's facilities, allowing the worker to understand the best way to satisfy the client's needs.

This happens with the overall BI service and the latest product (IG Portal).

The distribution is still unimproved, limiting the range of possible clients to a direct contact, with low awareness in the market. Partnerships with big vendors tend to be one way to improve the awareness of BI SME's in the market and a perfect way to increase trust over possible clients.

Having a recommendation from big suppliers has IBM, Microsoft or Oracle is a trustful stamp that will have a huge weight over the decision of the client. Increasing the awareness and trust of the client will with no doubt increase the distribution of the service and product in the market, but will also make easier the transition process from B2F to the client.

#### **Placement Strategies**

1. Increase the trust between the company and client;

The trust between companies and clients are essential to a good and long relationship. In order to improve the trust with its customers, B2F should do Focus Groups in order to

collect client's satisfaction and critics to the service and define service distribution key-points in order to satisfy the client's needs, measuring its performance through the growth of distribution channels after implementing the strategy.

2. Partner with big vendors such as Microsoft, IBM and Oracle to increase the brand awareness and improve the distribution process.

Big vendors are one of the best ways to conquer market share in the BI Market. To be a partner of Microsoft, IBM or Oracle boosts the range of operation and brand awareness, especially in a growing market like Portugal, due to the fact having one of the big vendors as a supplier increases the trust between company and client and increase the distribution process amongst clients. To partner with one big vendor is the best performance indicator the B2F can have in this strategy.

### **4.3.3 People**

At a business operating in a B2B environment, people tends to have a big weight in providing the best service possible to the clients. Company workers are part of the service which is provided and by increasing the capabilities and potential of its workers' companies are improving its service, connecting the quality of the service with the quality of the worker. If workers technical and personal training is improved then the opportunity to deliver a better service increase (Rafiq and Ahmed, 1995).

This evolution at internal resources, namely company workers, tend to increase no only the customer service of the company but also to improve the strategy of the company when trying to have a competitive advantage in the market (Simkin, 2000).

People are the most important resource in companies, especially in one like B2F. People in this businesses are the ones that can turn knowledge into proper information and results. With this said, it exists the necessity to introduce people with the right capabilities to produce and answer in the best way to the necessities of their clients and also conquer the objectives defined by the company.

Having people with new ideas, motivation, and the will to improve at each day is a plus in an organization. One way to have this factor is to keep a close contact with universities in order to recruit recent graduates to train them to be the best.

The Business Intelligence segment is having a huge growth nowadays, but it is still unknown to many of the students and even companies. So, to increase their brand awareness, B2F must have a close contact with the universities that they consider to be the best to share knowledge by having a regular presence with workshops and case studies in the BI and IT segment, using the students' organizations in order to achieve even more public. At the same time, the presence in companies' showoff/recruitment events is also a way to promote the brand and share the segment of operation.

## People Strategies

1. Increase the number of internal training sessions;

B2F has a culture of internal training delivered by the more experienced people in the company. With the fact that it has an internal academy, B2F must increase the number of internal training sessions to improve the technical and professional skills of its workers.

2. Increase the presence at Universities;

Using the fact that B2F has an academic culture one of the best ways to improve that aspect is to include in its strategies to have a bigger presence at Universities through workshops, case studies, debates, and employment events sharing knowledge and its culture on to the newest graduates.

One other way to reach to students and understand their capabilities is to have an open day to the office, where the student selected would have the possibility to understand how the company works and also (if possible) to be present at a certain meeting, in order to experience the corporate world. This option would show young talents how the company works, and would enhance their awareness in the market with a great connection to recent graduates.



#### 4.3.4 Price

Price is a key component to lure new clients and define the perceived value of the offering to the clients (Morgan, 2012).

Defining a value over the total package of service/product characteristics, price intends to turn the whole as attractive as possible. Companies need to define different pricing strategies attending (for example) competitors, economical fluctuations in order to obtain profit over costs (Brooksbank, 1999).

According to the data gathered in several meetings with B2F's CEO, he defines B2F as a high-quality company in the segment in which is operating, supported in the clients that have been working with them and with the big projects in which B2F is been involved until now.

With this, and with the only segmentation that is defined to their target clients, the price is **high**.

The value may vary through-out the clients, the size of the service and, of course, with the agreement of both parts in that matter.

With the image that B2F wants to communicate to their clients (professionalism, perfection, dedication), the price must be aligned with the quality of the service.

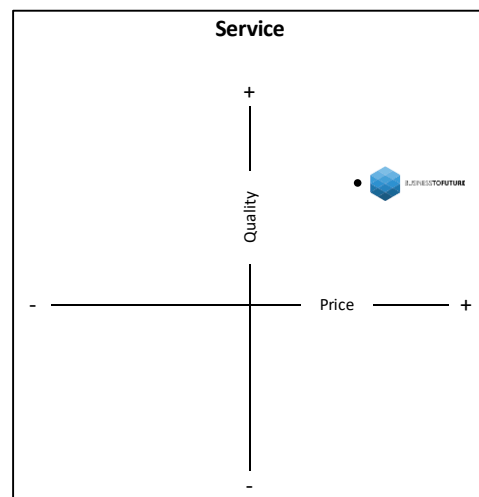


Chart 12 - B2F price/quality positioning

Despite this necessity, B2F can advance with different pricing strategies. It can choose to go with cost per hour at several aspects over the BI service; Sell by packages with different customer support hours; Differentiation by segments, in which different segments require specific aspects and high or low customer support to the client.

The best option must be taken with care in order to be the most attractive to the client.

## Price Strategy

- 1 Define prices according to the segments of operation;

B2F can define different prices according to the segments of operation. This can only be applied after an analysis of each market segment in which B2F operates and wishes to operate and applying a competitive price to the different market segments. The price should adjust by measuring the performance in gathering new clients in the several segments.

2. Define support hour packages according to service and client's preferences.

Many of the services at B2F deliver a support hour limit so that clients can present any problem within the service delivered. One of the strategies that must be taken abroad is the definition of support hour packages in order to deliver different solutions to different necessities of the customers with the main objective to retain the actual customers to B2F's services.

#### **4.3.5 Process**

Companies need to develop certain procedures, create mechanisms or practice activities in order to implement the service of the company. These are the processes that lead the company to reach to a certain objective.

It is essential to a company to define a good flow over its processes in order to get the best performance and obtain the best results. This can be represented by the development of certain products or the delay delivery of the service to a certain client. It is necessary that the processes pass on a good impact to the customer in order to improve the relationship between both companies (Rafiq and Ahmed, 1995).

The fact that companies develop the awareness to this point of the company helps them to understand where they can improve its process strategy and increase the satisfaction of the client with the delivery of the service (Simkin, 2000).

B2F has two major failures in its internal processes. One is the lack of internal organization between the workers to communicate with each other in order to increase process awareness in each client, turning available the action of any worker in each situation that B2F is operating.

The second weakness in the process of B2F is the lack of follow-up after providing the service to a certain client. Despite the support hour available, the connection between B2F and the client does not nurture a trust relationship between companies, which proves to be a waste of a valuable resource to increase income revenues and, therefore, market share.

#### **Process Strategies**

1. Create a follow-up program after the ending of the service

In order to improve one of the crucial aspects of the company, B2F needs to create a follow-up program in order to increase the interaction with the customer after the delivery of the project. The program should have an online approach (by e-mail marketing for example which will deliver less costs and have quicker results) but it can also be extended to a direct contact with the client.

2. Use IG Portal to improve the Internal organization and communication between workers.

B2F has lack of internal communication and organization when talking to share information between workers, which leads to a decrease of the relationship between B2F and its client. The use of the IG Portal can be the strategy to implement to solve this problem, centralizing information of the company, reachable to every worker and with data specifications at the same place. With this, any worker would be able know the service implementation and understand how a certain problem could be resolved.

#### 4.3.6 Promotion

Communication is an essential tool for companies especially when it is synced with the needs of the client, delivering value to the customer (Morgan, 2012). Companies need to communicate the services and benefits of a certain product or service to a certain target public (Brooksbank, 1999).

Companies only implement a strategy when communication conveys the purpose and personality of a company, having a clear and consistent communication to the public. Communication must be delivered after a persistent study of the client point-of-view in order to achieve the expected results when presented to the public (Ojasalo *et al.*, 2008).

At SME's, promotion is usually limited by the lack of resources available, be them financial aspects, marketing knowledge or lack of expertise over owners. These limitations increase the weight of the owner's decision according to promotion (Gilmore *et al.*, 2001).

The Word-of-mouth marketing is the main marketing strategy used in these SME's. It is the share of information between a consumer and a friend, colleague or another client. It offers the capacity to improve abilities to the sellers and reduce decision-making time and risk once the seller is personally communicating the product to the client. But, it does bring disadvantages as the limitation over the range of possible clients and few possibilities to measure the outcome of time and money spending in this type of promotion (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2011).

With the advance of technology and evolution in the market prospects and client's needs, companies need to evolve the communication strategies in order to improve results. Social Media offers the possibility to measure daily the results over promotions, to improve the way of communication and to replace proximity with virtual interaction and intimacy in popular websites like Facebook and LinkedIn (Jones *et al.*, 2015).

Social Media emerge as a solution for SME's to increase the communication level into the market and public in a bigger speed rate and with fewer costs, allowing companies to overcome the lack of resources to improve and implement more ambitious strategies with the traditional methods (Nobre and Silva, 2014).

Digital Marketing is a new strategy to improve communication, either in B2C or B2B markets. Companies at B2B tend to increase the investment in this strategic part once

B2B client relationship tends to become long-term relationships (Holliman and Rowley, 2014).

The ability to keep a healthy relationship is important once networks are an important piece in communication at SME's.

Networks allow SME's to have resources available which would not be able to if not with networks in the market. Networks allow companies to increase relationships with other companies in the same market and clients, which allows companies to increase the presence over the market and apply different strategies (Melenec and Jones, 2015).

B2F, as pointed before, has an external communication problem. B2F doesn't have a communication strategy defined, which leads to a lack of effort to share brand awareness over the market and not take advantage of crucial tools.

Social networks increased during the internship but still need to improve the content production and time spending to increase the range of targeted public and create a company image online.

The re-activation of the Social networks was only taken abroad at February 2016. At December the company shared a Christmas video with the audience of the Facebook and LinkedIn pages but only in February was taken a daily presence in those networks.

Weekly, B2F posted 3 with an interval of 1 day within each. This rule was taken into consideration at Facebook and LinkedIn. The celebration of the 10<sup>th</sup> year of B2F operating was also an aspect that increased the communication in these social networks. In order to appeal to that aspect, Facebook and LinkedIn had a post communicating this milestone and an internal Newsletter was sent to B2F's client using another social network tool, e-mail marketing.

On this period, February until the beginning of April, an experimental ad was promoted at LinkedIn with the main objective to lead the user to schedule a meeting and test a demo of any service of the company. The results were none.

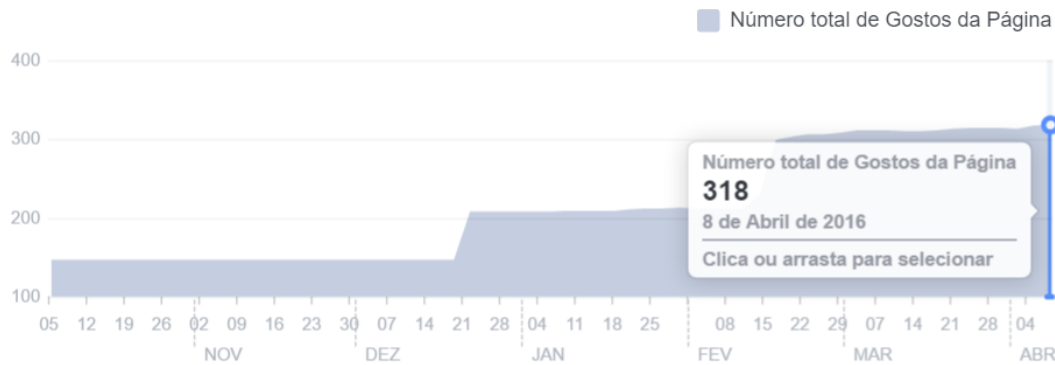


Chart 13 – B2F Facebook page likes (at the end of the internship)

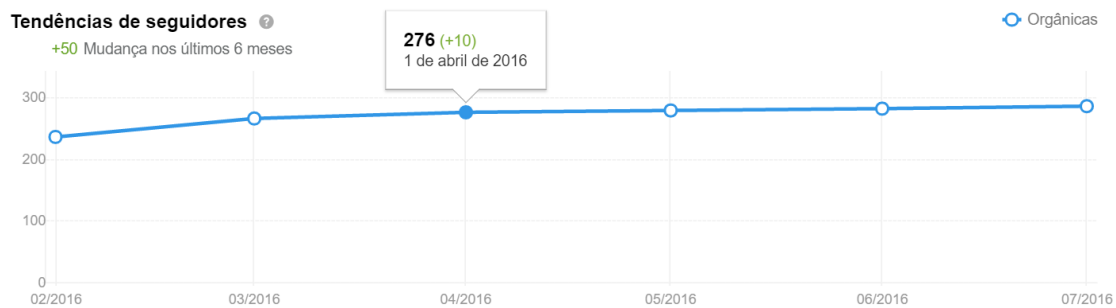


Chart 14 – B2F LinkedIn followers (at the end of the internship)

The increase of presence in the market must be practiced using social media as a main channel of communication due to the low cost associated and the high time-spending to turn Facebook, LinkedIn and E-mail marketing interesting and appealing to customers, but also with a higher bet in a physical marketing area. The creation of events, case studies and workshops will create a brand image into the market and create awareness over the experience a know-how of the company. The following strategies are not presented in a chronologically. That information is presented abroad (Chapter 6).

## Promotion Strategies

### 1. Produce marketing content;

B2F must produce content every day according to the necessities of the daily opportunities. It may produce videos, flyers, stands, business cards or other promotion aspect that can present the culture and communication standards defined by the company. This production can be done in the beginning of the year, with the planning of activities but also with the development of new opportunities and the creation of B2F's BI event.

### 2. Produce a company's presentation video;

A company's videos presentation is another of the strategies that need to implemented by B2F in order to share the culture and services of the company and have another approach to customers.

### 3. Increase presence into BI conferences and events;

To take part at a BI conference and/or event is a crucial step to achieve a bigger brand awareness in the market. B2F needs to determine which are the best events in which it can participate and take part of it in order to increase the range of clients and improve the network of the company.

### 4. Create BI event with expert speakers in the matter;

Not only can B2F participate a BI event, but it can also create one. To take the initiative to create and gather BI experts sharing knowledge and forecasts in this market would definitely increase the networks and awareness of the company in the present market.

### 5. Produce BI articles

One other way to improve B2F communication is by developing articles related with the BI market. This action will allow B2F to interact with its customers and pass on its



knowledge and credibility to the market and the best way to do it is by producing and share this content at least once a month.

#### 6. Create a monthly Newsletter

A Newsletter is always a good way to reach several customers at a very low cost and with higher chances to convert followers into real customers. B2F has the chance to communicate the advantages and opportunities to its customers through this communication channel and present it monthly to reach higher results.

#### 7. Create an opinion Blog

With the creation of BI articles, B2F can also create a discussion Blog to deliver personal opinions with different experts and workers in this area, increasing the range of communication of the company and creating an expert reputation amongst other BI workers. The content to this blog must be produced and shared at least every month.

#### 8. Improve Website performance

B2F must apply changes in the performance of its website. The way how information is presented is very important to increase the ability to convert new customers. So, B2F must update its website according the evolution of customer needs and market tendencies.

#### 9. Re-activate Social Networks

One of the major channels to communicate are Social networks, a resource that, until now, did not have a good use. February was the month in which B2F decided to improve its presence at social networks, but it needs to increase more time in this aspect in order to improve its digital communication.



### 4.3.7 Summary

#### Product

| <b>Strategy 1: Increase product's portfolio</b>    |                  |                            |                    |
|--|------------------|----------------------------|--------------------|
| <i>Action</i>                                      | <i>Objective</i> | <i>KPI</i>                 | <i>Responsible</i> |
| 1. Analyze competitor's product portfolio          | 1, 2, 3, 4       | Amount of products created | Marketing          |
| 2. Analyze market weaknesses/niches                |                  |                            | Marketing          |
| 3. Create targeted products for different segments |                  |                            | CEO                |
| 4. Register the product                            |                  |                            | Finance            |
| 5. Promote the product in the market               |                  |                            | Marketing          |

Table 11 – Product's strategy n° 1

| <b>Strategy 2: Improvement of Technical skills of the IG Portal</b> |                  |  |                    |
|---|------------------|--|--------------------|
| <i>Action</i>   | <i>Objective</i> | <i>KPI</i>                             | <i>Responsible</i> |
| 1. Analyze client's feedback  | 1, 2, 3, 4, 6    | N° of clients conquered with IG Portal | Marketing          |
| 2. Define technical skills according objectives to deliver          |                  |  | Marketing          |
| 3. Implement changes  |                  |  | CEO                |
| 4. Measure results  |                  |  | Finance            |

Table 12 – Product's strategy n° 2

#### People

| <b>Strategy 1: Increase number of internal training sessions</b> |                  |                                   |                    |
|--|------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------|
| <i>Action</i>  | <i>Objective</i> | <i>KPI</i>                        | <i>Responsible</i> |
| 1. Define training modules and sessions                          | 6, 7             | N° of internal sessions delivered | CEO                |
| 2. Create chronogram   |                  |                                   | Human Resources    |
| 3. Begin with internal training sessions                         |                  |                                   | CEO                |

Table 13 - People's strategy n° 1

| <b>Strategy 2: Increase presence at Universities</b>   |                  |   |   |
|--|------------------|---|---|
| <i>Action</i>  | <i>Objective</i> | <i>KPI</i>                                | <i>Responsible</i>                                |
| 1. Define type of operation (workshop, case study, etc)<br>2. Select universities<br>3. Contact the targeted universities<br>4. Promote at universities and social media | 2, 7             | N° of presences at different Universities | CEO<br>Human Resources<br>Commercial<br>Marketing |

Table 14 - People's strategy n° 2

## Price

| <b>Strategy 1: Define prices according to the segments of operation</b> |                  |   |                      |
|---|------------------|---|----------------------|
| <i>Action</i>   | <i>Objective</i> | <i>KPI</i>                                    | <i>Responsible</i>   |
| 1. Market Benchmarking<br>2. Define price policy                        | 1, 3, 4          | N° of clients conquered on different segments | Marketing<br>Finance |

Table 15 - Price's strategy n° 1

| <b>Strategy 2: Define support hour packages according to service and client's preferences</b>                              |                  |  |  |
|--|------------------|--|--|
| <i>Action</i>  | <i>Objective</i> | <i>KPI</i>                             | <i>Responsible</i>   |
| 1. Group focus<br>2. Analyze client's satisfaction<br>3. Define services support hours<br>4. Define price packaging policy | 1, 3, 4          | N° of clients retained to B2F services | Marketing / CEO<br>Marketing / CEO<br>Finance / CEO<br>Finance / CEO |

Table 16 - Price's strategy n° 2

## Place

| <b>Strategy 1: Increase the trust between the company and client</b>  |                  |                             |  |
|---|------------------|-----------------------------|--|
| <i>Action</i>   | <i>Objective</i> | <i>KPI</i>                  | <i>Responsible</i>   |
| 1. Group focus<br>2. Analyze client's satisfaction<br>3. Define services distribution key-points<br>4. Implement the strategy | 2, 7             | N° of distribution channels | Marketing / CEO<br>Marketing / CEO<br>Commercial / CEO<br>Commercial / CEO |

Table 17 - Place's strategy n° 1

**Strategy 2:** Partner with big vendors to increase the brand awareness and improve the distribution process

| <i>Action</i>   | <i>Objective</i> | <i>KPI</i>                          | <i>Responsible</i>                                      |
|---|------------------|-------------------------------------|---|
| 1. Analyze vendor's partnership process<br>2. Contact vendors<br>3. Define partner<br>4. Promote the partnership through communication channels | 1, 2, 3, 4       | N° of partnerships with big vendors | Marketing / CEO<br>Commercial / CEO<br>CEO<br>Marketing |

Table 18 - Place's strategy n° 2

Process

**Strategy 1:** Create follow-up program at the end of the service

| <i>Action</i>   | <i>Objective</i> | <i>KPI</i>                | <i>Responsible</i>   |
|---|------------------|---------------------------|--|
| 1. Collect information<br>2. Define strategy<br>3. Test and improve if necessary<br>4. Implement the strategy | 2, 5             | N° of successful contacts | Marketing / CEO<br>Marketing / CEO<br>Commercial / CEO<br>Commercial / CEO |

Table 19 – Process's Strategy n° 1

**Strategy 2:** Use IG Portal to improve internal processes

| <i>Action</i>  | <i>Objective</i> | <i>KPI</i>                             | <i>Responsible</i>                                      |
|--|------------------|--|---|
| 1. Define internal organization<br>2. Test and improve if necessary<br>3. Implement the strategy | 6, 7             | N° of documents delivered to employees | Marketing / CEO<br>Commercial / CEO<br>Commercial / CEO |

Table 20 – Process's Strategy n° 2

## Promotion

| Strategy 1: Produce Marketing Content   |           |                        |             |
|---|-----------|------------------------|-------------|
| Action  | Objective | KPI                    | Responsible |
| 1. Define shareable content   | 2         | N° of content produced | Marketing   |
| 2. Acquire marketing equipment  |           |                        | Financial   |
| 3. Produce marketing content (online content, flyers, business cards, stands) |           |                        | Marketing   |
| 4. Share content according to the strategy defined                            |           |                        | Marketing   |

Table 21 - Promotion's strategy n° 1

| Strategy 2: Produce a company's presentation video |           |                                 |             |
|--|-----------|---------------------------------|-------------|
| Action   | Objective | KPI                             | Responsible |
| 1. Define video script                             | 2         | N° of days to produce the video | Marketing   |
| 2. Produce video                                   |           |                                 | Marketing   |
| 3. Share video through social networks             |           |                                 | Marketing   |

Table 22 - Promotion's strategy n° 2

| Strategy 3: Increase presence at BI event and conferences |            |  |             |
|---|------------|--|-------------|
| Action  | Objective  | KPI                                      | Responsible |
| 1. Analysis of events and conferences over the year       | 1, 2, 3, 4 | N° of presences at BI events/conferences | Marketing   |
| 2. Collect entrance values                                |            |  | Marketing   |
| 3. Definition of workers attending the event/conference   |            |  | CEO         |

Table 23 - Promotion's strategy n° 3

| Strategy 4: Create BI event with expert speakers         |            |                     |                       |
|--|------------|---------------------|-----------------------|
| Action   | Objective  | KPI                 | Responsible           |
| 1. Define purpose of the event                           | 1, 2, 3, 4 | N° of registrations | Marketing / CEO       |
| 2. Contact speakers                                      |            |                     | Human Resources / CEO |
| 3. Define line-up of the event                           |            |                     | CEO                   |
| 4. Promote the event over several communication channels |            |                     | Marketing             |

Table 24 - Promotion's strategy n° 4

### Strategy 5: Produce BI Articles

| Action                           | Objective | KPI                | Responsible     |
|----------------------------------|-----------|--------------------|-----------------|
| 1. Define topics of the articles | 2         | N° of interactions | Marketing / CEO |
| 2. Produce the articles          |           |                    | Marketing / CEO |
| 3. Share the articles            |           |                    | CEO             |

Table 25 – Promotion's strategy n° 5

### Strategy 6: Create monthly Newsletter

| Action   | Objective | KPI                                     | Responsible     |
|--|-----------|---|-----------------|
| 1. Define the Newsletter public                    | 2, 5      | N° of Newsletters interactions/openings | Marketing / CEO |
| 2. Define the Newsletter content                   |           |   | Marketing / CEO |
| 3. Produce Newsletter                              |           |   | Marketing       |
| 4. Share Newsletter through communication channels |           |   | Marketing       |

Table 26 – Promotion's strategy n° 6

### Strategy 7: Create an opinion Blog

| Action                 | Objective | KPI                           | Responsible     |
|------------------------|-----------|-------------------------------|-----------------|
| 1. Create Blog content | 2         | N° of Blog posts interactions | Marketing / CEO |
| 2. Create Blog         |           |                               | Marketing       |
| 3. Share Content       |           |                               | Marketing       |

Table 27 – Promotion's strategy n° 7

### Strategy 8: Improve Website performance

| Action                     | Objective | KPI                          | Responsible     |
|----------------------------|-----------|------------------------------|-----------------|
| 1. Define changes to apply | 2         | N° of visitors / conversions | Marketing / CEO |
| 2. Develop New Website     |           |                              | Marketing       |
| 3. Promote the new website |           |                              | Marketing       |

Table 28 – Promotion's strategy n° 8

### Strategy 9: Re-Activate Social Networks

| Action                            | Objective | KPI                                       | Responsible |
|-----------------------------------|-----------|---|-------------|
| 1. Define the Social Networks     | 2         | N° of interactions at each social network | Marketing   |
| 2. Define communication standards |           |   | Marketing   |
| 3. Produce content                |           |   | Marketing   |
| 4. Start to share content         |           |   | Marketing   |

Table 29 – Promotion's strategy n° 9





#### **4.4 Conclusions**

An internal and external analysis enable the conclusion of the strengths and weaknesses of the company as the opportunities and threats of the market in which B2F operates.

With the definition of the main objectives of the company, it was possible to define marketing strategies that can create an advantage over the competitors defining specific strategies over crucial key points as people, price, product, place, and promotion.



## 5. Chronogram and Budgeting

This Communication Chronogram intends to help the company to implement the strategies delivered in the previous chapter in order to increase the results and reach the objectives.

The next table presents the implementation's plan chronogram since January 2016 until December 2016.

| <b>Actions</b>                                      | <b>Jan</b> | <b>Feb</b> | <b>Mar</b> | <b>Apr</b> | <b>May</b> | <b>Jun</b> | <b>Jul</b> | <b>Aug</b> | <b>Sep</b> | <b>Oct</b> | <b>Nov</b> | <b>Dec</b> |
|---|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| <b>Increase product's portfolio</b>                 |            |            |            |            |            |            |            |            |            |            |            |            |
| <i>Analyze market segments</i>                      |            |            |            |            |            |            |            |            |            |            |            |            |
| <i>Define product's technical features</i>          |            |            |            |            |            |            |            |            |            |            |            |            |
| <i>Promote the new products at the Event</i>        |            |            |            |            |            |            |            |            |            |            |            |            |
| <b>Improve IG Portal technical features</b>         |            |            |            |            |            |            |            |            |            |            |            |            |
| <i>Client's feedback and develop improvements</i>   |            |            |            |            |            |            |            |            |            |            |            |            |
| <i>Promote new features</i>                         |            |            |            |            |            |            |            |            |            |            |            |            |
| <b>Increase n° of internal sessions</b>             |            |            |            |            |            |            |            |            |            |            |            |            |
| <i>Define training content and chronogram</i>       |            |            |            |            |            |            |            |            |            |            |            |            |
| <i>Implement</i>                                    |            |            |            |            |            |            |            |            |            |            |            |            |
| <b>Increase presence at Universities</b>            |            |            |            |            |            |            |            |            |            |            |            |            |
| <i>Define operation (case study, workshop, etc)</i> |            |            |            |            |            |            |            |            |            |            |            |            |
| <i>Define Universities and contact</i>              |            |            |            |            |            |            |            |            |            |            |            |            |
| <i>Promote strategy</i>                             |            |            |            |            |            |            |            |            |            |            |            |            |
| <b>Increase trust between company and client</b>    |            |            |            |            |            |            |            |            |            |            |            |            |
| <i>Gather and analyze client's feedback</i>         |            |            |            |            |            |            |            |            |            |            |            |            |
| <i>Define key-distribution points</i>               |            |            |            |            |            |            |            |            |            |            |            |            |
| <i>Implement</i>                                    |            |            |            |            |            |            |            |            |            |            |            |            |

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| Partner with big vendor                        |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Target and contact possible vendors            |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Settle partnership                             |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Promote partnership                            |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Create Follow-up program                       |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Collect information                            |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Define process and test                        |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Test program                                   |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Implement                                      |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Use IG Portal to improve internal organization |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Define process and test with IG Portal         |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Implement                                      |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Produce communication content                  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Define content (flyers, cards, etc)            |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Produce content                                |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Re-activate Social Networks                    |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Define Social Networks to operate              |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Produce and Sharing content                    |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Produce Company Video                          |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Define Script                                  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Produce Video                                  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Share company's video                          |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Produce BI articles                            |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Produce articles                               |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Share articles                                 |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Create a monthly Newsletter                    |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Define Newsletter layout                       |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Define customer list                           |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Send Monthly Newsletters                       |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

| Create an opinion Blog                    |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|---|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| Create Blog                               |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Produce and Share content                 |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Improve Website performance               |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Define Content                            |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Create new layout and features            |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Promote new website                       |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Activate new website                      |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Increase presence at BI events            |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Define the events / conferences to attend |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Create a BI event with experts            |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Define event concept                      |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Contact speakers                          |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Define location                           |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Promotion                                 |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| The Event                                 |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

Table 30 – B2F's Strategies chronogram

Due to the limitations faced by SME's in the market (approached in previous chapters), budgeting becomes an important aspect to plan the investment in the different aspect of the plan and reach to high results.

The investment at B2F communication plan should not exceed the 15.000€.

| Resources to invest   | Budget         |
|---|----------------|
| B2F's own BI event  | 12.000€        |
| Presence in several BI conference/events during the year    | 1.000€         |
| Acquisition of Marketing equipment and software             | 1.000€         |
| Investment in online promotion (Facebook, LinkedIn, Google) | 1.000€         |
| <b>Total</b>  | <b>15.000€</b> |

Table 31 – B2F's Budget (Internal decision)

B2F's own BI event is the aspect that causes higher expenses in the company once it's promotion must be one of the main resources to bet in order to reach to a wider public in the market. Despite the promotion, operational aspects are also important as catering, the renting of the location and the staff to prepare the location to the event.

The presence at others BI events/conferences have a maximum budget of 1000€ which will be distributed between the events through the year and the amount of employees that can attend to that event/conference.

The investment at Marketing equipment shall be distributed between cameras and other accessories needed to develop the strategies mentioned in the previous chapters and software licenses to produce and edit the content.

Lastly, the investment at Marketing communication using Social Networks as channel as a limitation of 1000€ as well which shall be distributed between previously defined content strategies in order to reach the highest and best results possible.

## **6. Final Conclusions**

The present report intended to develop a Marketing Plan to the company B2F, with the main purpose to re-launch the brand into the market using a communication plan adapted to the current environment.

Communication is an essential part of any company's Marketing Plan, especially at SME's. The lack of resources felt by SME's is the main cause to the key focus of communication. It is the best strategy that small companies can develop in order to increase awareness pursuant to higher results in the market. These limitations lead to a bigger importance of the CEO roll which can cause bigger problems. The absence of knowledge at certain aspects as communication strategies, or lack of them, may lead the company to ruin.

With the speed of change in the market, companies need to update the Marketing strategies which are already being used like price, place, product of promotion. With the increase of the professional presence at social media, companies need to change the traditional approach and update the strategies according to the sudden changes felt in the market.

A company that can't, or don't want, to follow and implement tendencies is as good as dead. To be behind competitors in such a competitive market decreases the chance of opportunities and delays the chance to make progress with those opportunities.

To have a very good consciousness of the external environment of the company such as competitors, barriers, threats and opportunities are as important as the acknowledgement of the strengths, limitations and the ability to create a competitive advantage towards competitors. These key factors will be the main influencers of the success of the Marketing Plan defined and implemented by the company.

B2F presented a group of limitations that restricted the progress of the company through the evolution of the market as lack of communication, internal organization or client management. These aspects must be improved in order to reach the main objective of the company, increase market share, and become the best BI company in the North of Portugal. Strategies mentioned in the previous chapters should be become the main source of improvement of the different problems of the company.

It is recommended that B2F improves the presence at Social Networks once it represents a helpful resource to increase the engagement with its customers via Facebook, Linked and E-mail Marketing with a small amount of costs.

Improving the customer follow-up should be another aspect to consider by developing a program that allows the company to maintain a continuous contact with its customers and improve the connection between companies.

Moreover, B2F must use its own product, IG Portal, in order to improve its communication between employees on the different client's projects. This stands a major problem at B2F and can be easily solved by using the platform develop which allows to centralize all the information and grant access to any user by the admin. This strategies, along with the other stated in this document define the plan that B2F needs to follow to achieve its objectives.

I hope that this report helps B2F settled the path to reach to higher goals and become the best BI company in the North of Portugal.



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## 8. Appendix

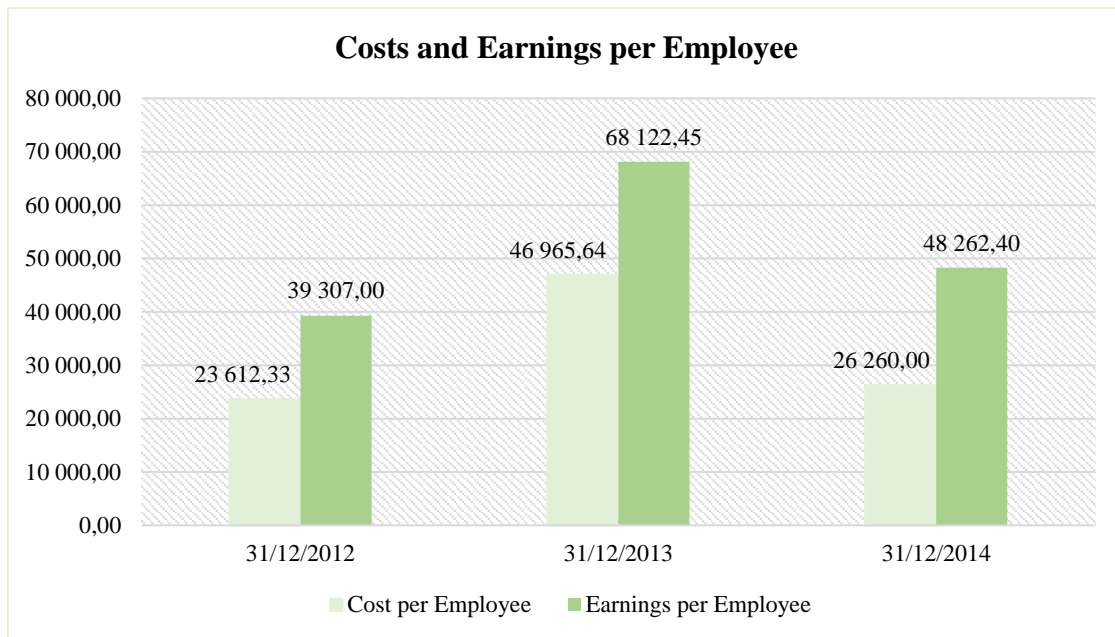


Chart 15 - Costs and Earnings per Employee



Chart 16 - Number of employees at B2F in 2012, 2013 and 2014

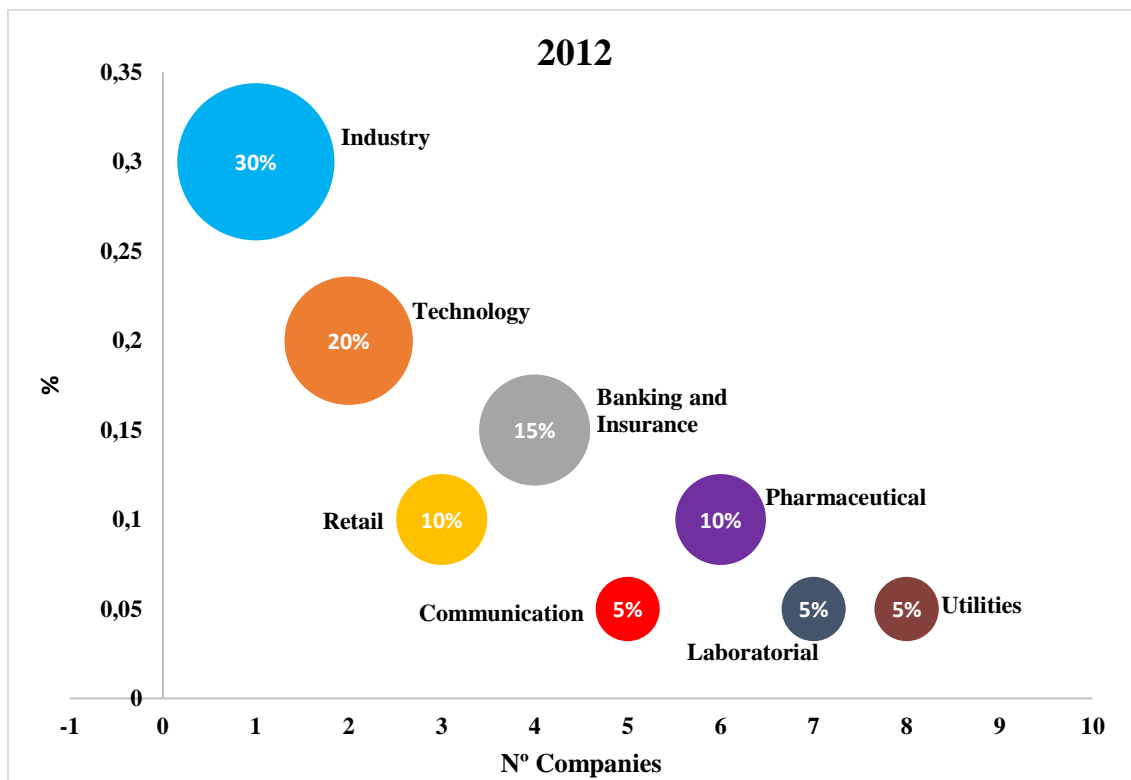


Chart 17 - Market segment growth and weight over B2F operations at 2012

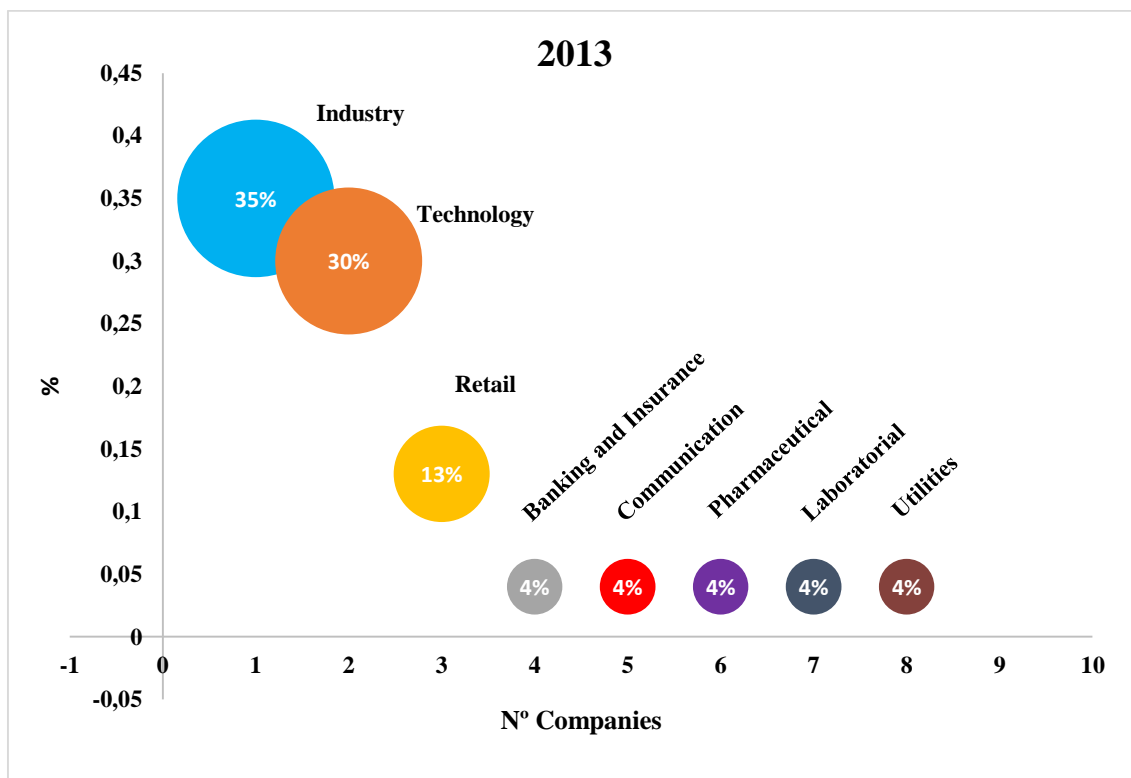


Chart 18 - Market segment growth and weight over B2F operations at 2013

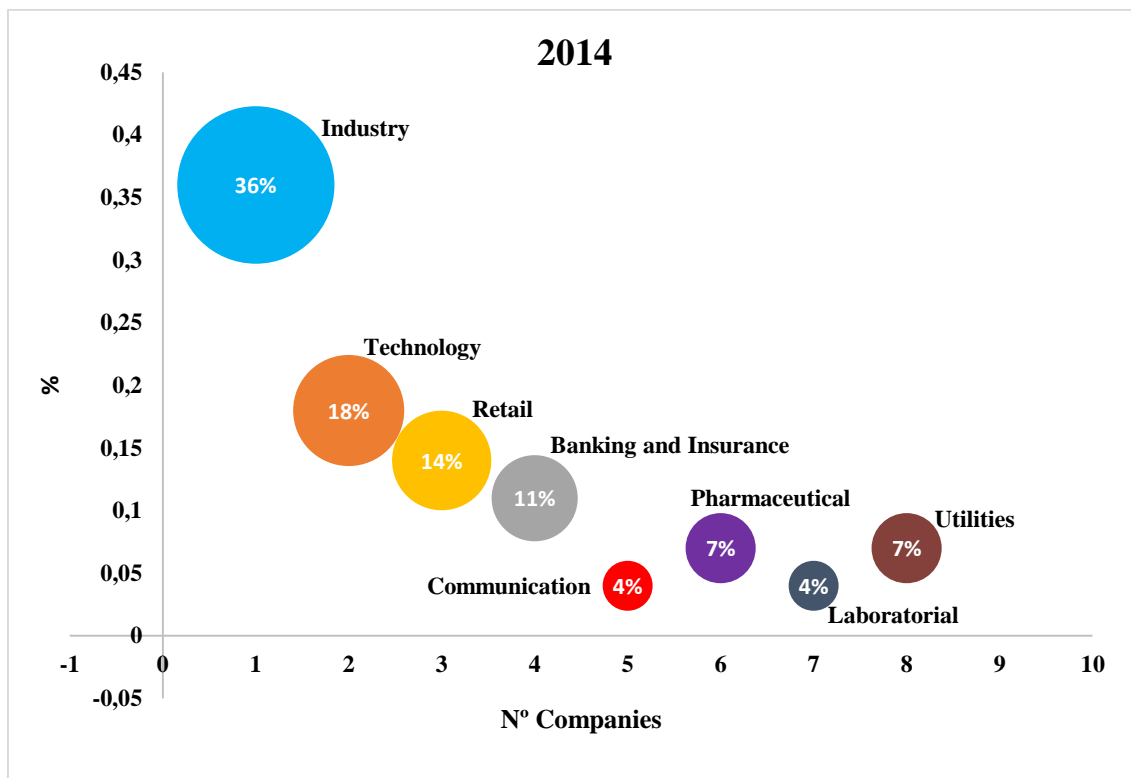


Chart 19 - Market segment growth and weight over B2F operations at 2014